

SHAKSPEARE DIVERSIONS

A Medley of MOTLEY WEAR

BY

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— I have gone here and there,
And made myself a MOTLEY to the view
SHAKSPEARE'S *Sonnets*, cx
MOTLEY'S the only wear
As You Like It, Act II Sc vii

To wear whatever trimmings came up in fashion, keeping on all together,
which amounted in time to a MEDLEY the most antic you can possibly conceive
A medley of rags, and lace, and rents, and fringes However, for this medley
he made a shift to find a very plausible name
SWIFT, *A Tale of a Tub*, Sect vi, *passim*

LONDON
DALDY, ISBISTER, & CO.
56, LUDGATE HILL

P R E F A C E.

THAT these DIVERSIONS are not very diverting,—it were ~~shurlish~~, by anticipation, to grudge to gentle Dulness that dearly loves a joke, one so mild and mediocre as that ; so ready-made and second-hand ; so obvious, and so obviously small The title may indeed seem a ready-made invitation to that jest In choosing, however, the word DIVERSIONS for a title, regard was had to the primary grammatical import, as well as to the secondary and popular one. It was meant to imply a characteristic digressiveness, as well as to offer something in the way of entertainment, neither ‘fast’ nor ‘loud,’ nor in the least pretentious to tickle the palate that can be tickled with nothing quieter than a ‘screaming farce.’ But haply, after all,—if not consciously, then semi-consciously, or sub-consciously—it was of himself the writer was thinking, when he fixed on such terms as ‘divert,’ and ‘diverting.’ For it had become a necessity to divert his thoughts from the nightmare pressure of ‘obstinate questionings’ and ‘blank misgivings,’ whose presence was not otherwise to be put by ; the more so when health had failed him, and—by ‘fallings from us, vanishings,’—other treasures ; that were, in possession, and that are, in memory, dearer still Of the MEDLEY and MOTLEY character of the book, the mottoes on the title-page are perhaps sufficiently significant Were other such indications in request, other passages of Shakespeare’s very own are amply available for the purpose. There

might be cited and applied what Benedick tells his mocking friends: 'The body of your discourse is sometimes guarded [trimmed] with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on, neither.' And the predominant tendency to divert and digress might be glanced at in old Gonzalo's exclamation,

Here's a maze trod, indeed,
Through forth-rights, and meanders ,

or, again, in the resolve of Antipholus of Syracuse,

I will go lose myself,
And wander up and down ,

or, once more, in the blithe strain of vagrant Autolycus,

And when I wander here and there,
I then do go most right

Thus to cram even a Preface with quotations may be deemed a course against all propriety and beyond all precedent. But it is at least consistent with the body of the work. Good things ought not to be wanting in so multifarious a medley, but let the reader think twice, or with Mr. Gladstone let him think thrice, before assigning any one of them to the compiler's credit,—to the account of a scribe so given over to transcribing,—a conveyancer so bent on conveying, (for, as Ancient Pistol mouths the euphemism, 'Convey, the wise it call')

Though in effect complete in itself, this volume is in purpose and intent an instalment only. A second series is ready in manuscript, how soon to be manipulated by compositors, it is for readers to decide: and they with whom lies the decision are none too likely to put undue pressure on the press.

Patent to all observers is the deliberate avoidance, in these pages, of anything like preaching, and indeed of whatever is

directly and formally didactic, from an ethical point of view. Such a theme as the Death of Falstaff might seem to warrant, some will think to demand, a course of moral reflections. But the aim has been simply to illustrate and annotate Shakspeare; to catch up cues of his giving, to adapt and adopt, to variegate and reverberate, to echo and re-echo those cues, from all quarters. It has been to diversify his given theme with variations in every known key. It has been to ply his chosen text with parallels—albeit none but himself can be his parallel. But it has never been, in pulpit parlance, and after pulpit precedent, to ‘improve’ the subject, or to draw practical lessons and exemplary platitudes from it, to the extent of a sweet seventeenthly. And this is at least in the spirit of Shakspeare himself, who, profoundly moral in the essence of his work, and works, was ever content to let his mirrored reflection of Nature speak for itself. His moral was interfused with, it interpenetrated, his creations, but never was tacked on to them, label-like, or ticket-wise,—nor was hung out as the bush that good wine needs not; for good wine asserts itself, if not in the drinking, then after it is down. Far be it from this annotator purposely to water Shakspeare’s wine.

F. J.

March, 1875.

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SHAKSPEARE DIVERSIONS.

CHAPTER I.

Among the Sonnets.

§ I.

WEEPING TO HAVE, AS FEARING TO LOSE

“This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
But weep to have that which it fears to lose”

SHAKSPEARE'S *Sonnets*, lxiv

REVOLVING the ravages of Time, the inroads of Death, the sonneteer was by Ruin itself taught thus to ruminate, that time would come, and take his love away. And to him this thought was “as a death, which cannot choose but weep to have that which it fears to lose.” The very sense of possession is thus pathetic, as suggestive of deprivation and loss. To have and to hold, what avails it?—the tighter the hold, the more tremulous. What one cannot afford to lose, one rejoices with trembling to have, weeping to think how soon, however long first, one may have it not.

Young says, in the opening book of his *Complaint*, “I tremble at the blessings once so dear, and every pleasure pains me to the heart.” Like the princess in *Rasselas*, “I shall henceforward fear to yield my heart to excellence, however bright, or to fondness, however tender, lest I should lose again what I have lost in Pekuah.” Hood's lines are true with a sad truth,—

“The sunniest things throw sternest shade,
And there is ev’n a happiness
That makes the heart afraid”

The miser in the fable could not sleep because of his treasure; and there is a suggestive analogy between Shakspeare’s line and what Horace says of him. “Quærit, et inventis miser abstinet et timet uti,” gain is the wretched man’s one thing needful, his all in all; and yet he abstains, and dreads to use what he has gained. Hawthorne found something greatly more awful in happiness than in sorrow,—the latter being, he said, earthly and finite, the former composed of the substance and texture of eternity, so that spirits still embodied may well tremble at it. Wordsworth not only had in mind, but quoted, Shakspeare’s sonnet, when he said, in the fifth book of his *Prelude*, that

“Tremblings of the heart
It gives, to think that our immortal being
No more shall need such garments; and yet man,
As long as he shall be the child of earth,
Might almost ‘weep to have’ what he may lose,
Nor be himself extinguish’d, but survive,
Abject, depress’d, forlorn, disconsolate”

In his *Excursion*, the solitary bids them tremble to whom hath been assigned a course of days composing happy months, and they as happy years; “for mutability is nature’s bane.” And elsewhere, among his miscellaneous poems, the lines beginning, “If thou in the dear love of some one friend hast been so happy that thou know’st what thoughts will sometimes in the happiness of love make the heart sink,” are perhaps the key to that stanza of the *Two April Mornings* which follows the description of a blooming girl, whose hair was wet with points of morning dew, and whom merely to gaze on “was a pure delight:” no fountain from its rocky cave e’er tripped with foot so free; she seemed as happy as a wave that dances on the sea. Yet not a pure delight; for,

“There came from me a sigh of pain
Which I could ill confine;
I look’d at her, and look’d again:
And did not wish her mine!”

It strikes nearly the same chord with that which vibrates through Leigh Hunt's lines to his "little, patient boy," in sickness: "I sit me down and think of all thy winning ways, yet almost wish, with sudden shrink, that I had less to praise" To one of the late Lord Lytton's philosophic students, one knowledge alone seems sufficient to embitter all the happiness of love—the knowledge that the object beloved must die "What a perpetuity of fear that knowledge creates!" Change, accident, death, all menace us in each person whom we regard. every new affection opens new channels by which grief can invade us. In another of his books he makes it a noticeable thing how much fear increases love—how much we love, in proportion to our fear of losing (or even to our fear of injury done to) the beloved object. He deems it an instance of the reaction of the feelings: the love produces the fear, and the fear reproduces the love In yet another occurs the apostrophe, "Are we, O Ruler of the future! imbued with the half-felt spirit of prophecy as the hour of evil approaches—do we not tremble as we love?" So of Dante, and his passion for Beatrice, Mr. Theodore Martin observes, that it was a passion seemingly overshadowed by a dim sense of misfortune, it was not merely the sadness which lies at the bottom of all deep emotion, but an almost prophetic foreboding of disappointment and early death. "When a chance gleam of joy struck across his heart, we find him doubting his claim to the fearful happiness." Dryden's *Eleonora* invites to citation in this connexion:

"His passion still improved; he loved so fast,
As if he fear'd each day would be her last.
Too true a prophet to foresee the fate
That should so soon divide their happy state."

Even Ellesmere is fain to avow, "With my fear of any great felicity in this world, and my horror of having to part from it, I almost wish I had never seen Mildred. She has made life too agreeable to me." But that opens out a large question, which Plutarch has touched upon in his Life of Thales, when quoting that philosopher's explanation of his celibacy.

Thales dreaded to be struck down, like Solon, by tidings of a dear son's death, and Plutarch objects that to refrain from seeking what is desirable, for fear of losing it, is to act a very mean and absurd part: by the same rule, a man might refuse the enjoyment of riches, or honour, or wisdom, because it is possible for him to be deprived of them. Nay, Thales himself could not be secured from fears, by living single, unless he would renounce all interest in his friends, his relations, and his country. Norman Tancred, that in Salerno reigned, was with one fair daughter only blessed,

"And bless'd he might have been with her alone,
But oh ! how much more happy had he none !"

Horace Walpole wrote to Lady Ossory that he had such a passion for dogs, that a favourite one was a greater misery than pleasure, and to give him one was to sow him with anxiety. As the old bachelor with his dogs, so the young husband and father with his wife and children, Thomas Moore, for instance, who writes from his Mayfield cottage, in 1812, of his wife and their two little girls: "Bessy's heart is wrapt up in them, and the only pain they ever give me is the thought of the precariousness of such treasures, and the way I see that her life depends upon theirs."* Perthes used to note how, from the moment of a child's death, the parent's eye is dulled, and the beauty of life gone: every little accident, a cough, a change in the tone of voice, excites cruel anxiety. That affectionate sister, Elizabeth Robinson, the Mrs. Montagu that was to be, wrote of her seven brothers, while yet in her teens, "I would not part with one of them for a kingdom. If I had but one, I should be distracted about him." To apply the lines in the first scene of *Héracles*,—

"Qui crôit les posséder les sent s'évanouir ;
Et la peur de les perdre empêche d'en jouir."

* As a variation, in quite another key, of the Shakspearean text, we may take what Moore said of Rogers, in the same year "I always feel with him, that the fear of *losing* his good opinion almost embitters the *possession* of it."—*Letters*, No. xciv.

What a wide field for anxiety and distress, exclaims Jane Taylor, is a large family, to every member of which one's happiness seems to cling. Every felicity, indeed, says Sir Arthur Helps, as well as wife and children, is a hostage to Fortune. The poet and father of Baby May describes, in her regard and on her account,

"A sinking of heart, a shuddering dread, too deep for a word or tear ;
Or a joy whose measure may not be said, as the future is hope or fear ;
A sumless venture, whose voyage's fate we would and yet would not
know,
Is she whom we dower with love as great as is perilled by hearts below."

Just as in another volume of verse from the same pen we read,—

"Looking on her, we start in dread ; we stay our shuddering breath,
And shrink to feel the terror said in that one dark word—death."

The beauty of children is a terror—a fearful loveliness, exclaims Roderick in the *Painter of Ghent*. Must we then tremble in the possession of present pleasures, for the fear of their embittering futurity ? asks Henry Mackenzie.

"For human beauty is a sight
To sadden rather than delight,
Being the prelude of a lay
Whose burthen is decay."

Steele, in one of his plays, speaks of tenderness forming dangers where they are not ; and the speaker protests, "Not a fond mother of a long-wished-for only child beholds with such kind terrors her infant offspring, as I do her I love !" Morbid as the feeling may be, there is found for it no anodyne in all the schools from Plato to Kant, as De Quincey holds—the feeling described by Henry More the Platonist, and to which the human mind is liable at times,—that of being a martyr to one's own too passionate sense of beauty, and the consequent too pathetic sense of its decay : beauty carried to excess becomes a source of endless affliction to him, because everywhere he sees it liable to the touch of decay and mortal change. Especially, it has been said, is joy painful when

It comes after a continuance of suffering,—painful because we have become sceptical touching delight, we have lost the power to believe in sustained happiness “It comes, the bright stranger, but we shrink appalled from its beauty, lest, after all, it should be nothing but a phantom.” We are told of Archibald Floyd that his young wife made the stout-hearted Scotchman so happy that he was sometimes almost panic-stricken by the contemplation of his own prosperity, and would fall down on his knees and pray that this blessing might not be taken from him In our wildest happiness we are still unsatisfied, for it seems then as if the cup of joy were too full, and “we grow cold with terror at the thought that, even because of its fulness, it may possibly be dashed to the ground” The question is put in the *New Phædo*, Who is there that has not said to himself, if possessed for a short time of one heart, entirely resembling and responding to his own,—who has not said to himself, daily and hourly, “This cannot last”? Has he not felt a dim, unacknowledged dread of death? has he not, for the first time, shrunk from penetrating the future? has he not become timorous and uneasy? is he not like the miser* who journeys on a road begirt with a thousand perils, and who yet carries with him his all? “There was a world of deep and true feeling in Byron’s expression which, critically examined, is but a conceit: Love hath, indeed, ‘made his best interpreter a sigh’” St Francis de Sales said of himself that his life was so happy that “sometimes I tremble lest God should have given me my share of Paradise in this life, for, in truth, I scarce know what adversity means.” Dr Arnold at Laleham, in 1820, owned to a correspondent his fear lest his earthly happiness at that happy period might interest him too deeply; the hold which a man’s affections have on him is the more dangerous because the less

* M^r. Prescott observes of his conquerors of Peru and its golden treasures, in 1533, “Their new acquisitions gave them additional cause for solicitude like a miser, they trembled in the midst of their treasures”—*Conquest of Peru*, Book iii, ch vi —*Un coffre, et rien dedans: eh gar!* is the light-hearted strain of Roger Bontemps.

suspected, he said ; and one may become an idolater almost before one feels the least sense of danger, and then comes the fear of losing the treasure, which one may love too fondly, "and that fear is indeed terrible. The thought of the instability of one's happiness comes in well to interrupt its full indulgence, and if often entertained must make a man either an Epicurean or a Christian in good earnest."

As prosperous principalities and powers are oftentimes subject to a nervous dread of change—for nothing that can happen can well make such better, and so the prosperous suffer from the vague foreboding of something which will make them worse—so with those in whom, as a living writer puts it, hope is narrowed down, not by the limit of grand possibility, but of little: there is something almost awful, he says, when your affairs are all going happily, when your mind is clear and equal to its work, when your bodily health is unbroken, and your home is pleasant, and your income is ample, and your children are merry and hopeful—in looking on to future years: the happier you are, the more there is of awe in the thought how frail are the foundations of your earthly happiness, what havoc may be made of them by the changes and chances of even a single day. Lord Cockburn, reviewing his tranquil life at bonny Bonaly, wrote thus in his *Memoirs*: "I have been too happy, and often tremble in the anticipation that the cloud must come at last." Ben Jonson's *Lovel* argues,

"Nor can so short a happiness but spring
A world of fear, with thought of losing it ;
Better be never happy, than to feel
A little of it, and then lose it ever."

Not so thought George the Third in regard of the "sweet little prince" he lost in 1783, and who was the darling of his heart. "Many people," he said, "would regret they ever *had* so sweet a child, since they were forced to part with him: that is not my case. I am thankful to God for having graciously allowed me to enjoy such a creature for four years." Jeffrey, on the other hand, as he wrote to Malthus in 1826, never looked at the rosy cheeks and slender form of

his only child without an inward shudder at the thought of how much utter wretchedness was suspended over him by so slight a cord. Of Southey's manner towards his darling boy Herbert, Mr. de Quincey bears record that while it "marked an excess of delirious doating, perfectly unlike the ordinary chastened movements of Southey's affections," it was also indicative of a something of vague fear—a premature unhappiness, as if already the inaudible tread of calamity could be divined, as if already he had lost him, which feeling, for the latter years of the boy's life, seemed to poison, for his father, the blessing of his presence. It was of a child he had lost some full dozen years earlier, that Southey wrote to a friend about the wistful melancholy with which he used to scan that dear child's fair face—"as though to impress more deeply in remembrance a face whose beauties were certainly to change, and perhaps to pass away." When he had lost Herbert, he said, as he grew calmer with time, "He was the main object of my hopes, those hopes have now no fears to alloy them (for this calamity was ever before mine eyes)." "No father was ever blest with a child more entirely such as he would have prayed for, and therefore it was that I always apprehended the calamity which has befallen me." Moore's familiar verses speak home to many a heart,—

"Oh, do not look so bright and blest,
For still there comes a fear,
When brow like thine looks happiest,
That grief is then most near
There looks a dread in all delight,
A shadow near each ray,
That warns us then, to fear their flight
When most we wish their stay."

As Welsted avows, in *Passion and Principle*, "The very joy of this happy moment adds new bitterness to my presentiments." Arthur Pendennis, as husband and father, gazing on his Laura embracing their child, suggests the query, Would you ask what the husband's feelings were as he looked at that sweet love, that sublime tenderness, that

pure saint blessing his life? "Of all the gifts of heaven to us below, that felicity is the sum and the chief I tremble as I hold it lest I should lose it, and be left alone in the blank world without it" The second of the *Three Gates*, which is Love, opens upon this avowal of heart to heart :

"I know that thou wilt love me to the end, . . .
So on thy faithful love do I depend,
As on a mother the most trusting child,
And never came to me a thought so wild
As that thy upright constancy should bend.
Why is it, then, pale shadows, like to fear,
Feigning thy love may change, dim the excess
Of my great joy? If I read nature clear,
Not thee I deadi, but my own happiness,
Which, lest it tempt Fate's envy, I make less,
And cloud it down to suit earth's cloudy sphere"

In his impassioned narrative of a *Household Wreck*, Mr. de Quincey's hapless autobiographer describes himself as anxious for his wife to an irrational extent ; and he sums up the description in what he calls "a most weighty line of Shakspeare"—the one which forms the text to this chapter of annotations ; for he lives under the constant presence of a feeling which only that great observer of nature, he thinks, has ever noticed,—namely, that merely the excess of his happiness had made him jealous of its ability to last, and in that extent less capable of enjoying it ; that, in fact, the prelibation of his tears, as a homage to its fragility, was drawn forth by the very sense that his felicity was too exquisite; in fine, that, as the great master words it, he "wept to have" (absolutely, by anticipation, shed tears in possessing) what he "so feared to lose."

§ II

SICK MAN AND DOCTOR, APPEAL AND SENTENCE

"As testy sick men, when their deaths be near,
No news but health from their physicians know "

SHAKESPEARE'S *Sonnets*, cvl

If the physician in such a case as the above lines represent be specially soft-hearted, he may be imagined checking himself in a frank disclosure to his patient of the worst, with some such compunctious self-visitings as the messenger in *Macbeth*—

"To fright you thus, methinks I am too savage,
To do worse to you, were fell cruelty,
Which is too nigh your person,"

in the other person, if a skeleton can be said to have one, or to be one, of impending death.

We have the authority of a distinguished physician for saying that a physician ought not to be an executioner, and a sentence of death on his face is as bad as a warrant for execution signed by the executive power. "As a general rule, no man has a right to tell another by word or look that he is going to die." It is allowed to be necessary in some extreme cases; but as a rule, Dr. O. W. Holmes deems it to be the last extreme of impertinence which one human being can offer to another. "You have killed me," said a patient once to a physician who had rashly told him he was incurable: he ought to have lived six months, but he was dead in six weeks. "If we will only let Nature and the God of Nature alone, persons will commonly learn their condition as early as they ought to know it, and not be cheated out of their natural birth-right of hope of recovery, which is intended to accompany sick people as long as life is comfortable, and is graciously replaced by the hope of heaven, or at least of rest, when life has become a burden which the bearer is ready to let fall." Mr. Lecky, to illustrate his assertion that whatever may be the foundation

of the moral law, in the eyes of the immense majority of mankind, there are some overwhelming considerations that will justify a breach of its provisions, takes the imaginary case of a man lying on a sick-bed, trembling between life and death, whom some great misfortune has befallen ; and he says that if the physician declared that the knowledge of that misfortune would be certain death to the patient, and if concealment were only possible by a falsehood, there are very few moralists who would condemn that falsehood. The argument will hold good equally of the physician's sentence of death. "We doctors," quoth Dr Amboyne, "are dissembling dogs. We have still something to learn in curing diseases ; but at making light of them to the dying, and other branches of amiable mendacity, we are masters." When Zeluco has received his death-wound, the surgeon sees from the first that a death-wound it is, but he thinks proper to soothe the sufferer by all sorts of encouraging words. Leaving the sick-room, he fairly tells the outsiders, a priest included, how the case stands. "If that is your real opinion," says Father Mulo, "why did you not inform the unhappy gentleman of the danger he is in ?" "Because it is my business, father, to cure him, if it is possible, and not to diminish the very small chance of his recovery by disagreeable news." And when the surgeon adds his conviction that Zeluco cannot possibly live above three days, "Jesu Maria !" cries the father, "why, for that very reason, sir, it is your indispensable duty to tell him the truth." Sir Walter Scott records in his Diary his having always thought that truth, however painful, is a great duty on such occasions, and that it is seldom concealment is justifiable. None the less, probably, would he have echoed Leigh Hunt's protest against those busybodies who never were so anxious, perhaps, in the cause of veracity before, by whom the dying man, whether he wishes it or not, or is fit to receive it or not, is to have the whole truth told him.

Lewis the Eleventh, in the course of his last illness,—during which he clung so yearningly to life, and set so many devout suppliants a-praying incessantly that he might not die,—had desired that he might be warned, but cautiously, when he was

in danger. Those around him paid no attention to this, but announced to him roughly and suddenly that death was at hand. It is noteworthy of Ferdinand the Catholic that he listened with entire composure to the announcement of his medical attendants that his end was very near; and that from the same moment he seemed to recover all his wonted fortitude and equanimity. Philip the Second, on the 22nd of July, 1598, asked Dr Mercado if his sickness was likely to have a fatal termination; but the physician, not having the courage at once to give the only possible reply, evaded the question. Ten days later, Father Diego, the king's confessor, after consultation with Mercado, announced to Philip that the only issue to his malady was death: already had he been lying for ten days on his back, "a mass of sores and corruption, scarcely able to move, and requiring four men to turn him in his bed" He is said, and by no friendly historian, to have expressed the greatest satisfaction at the sincerity which had now been used, and in the gentlest and most benignant manner to have thanked his informant for thus removing all doubts from his mind, and for giving him tidings which must influence so momentously his eternal welfare. We are told of the Emperor Charles the Sixth that when his disorder was declared mortal, he would not believe his danger, but sportively rallied his physicians on the falsity of their prognostics; finding at last, however, that they were seriously in the right, he resigned himself with tranquillity to the event. Of a later kaiser, again, Joseph the Second, we read that, finding himself rapidly declining, he called together his physicians, and charged them to tell him truly whether there were any hopes of amendment, and he too received the fatal verdict with complete firmness and submission.

At eighty-two, Edmund Waller, conscious of daily increasing evidences of decay, looked forward with composure to the change which he knew could not be far distant; and when a tumour in his legs made it necessary to obtain immediate medical aid, he requested Sir Charles Scarborough, as a friend, to tell him frankly the "meaning" of the swelling; and, being informed that "his blood would no

longer run," he calmly repeated a passage from Virgil, and forthwith prepared for death

Cardinal Mazarin's terror at being apprised by Guénaud of his approaching end, contrasts with the characteristic indifference of our Charles the Second, whose equanimity on the occasion Dryden thought worthy of a place in the *Threnodia Augustalis*:

"Death was denounced ; that frightful sound
Which even the best can hardly bear ,
He took the summons void of fear,
And unconcernedly cast his eyes around,
As if to find and dare the grisly challenger."

Whether Lewis the Fifteenth, as he lay a-dying, should be told that his malady was smallpox, caused infinite perturbation among his perplexed attendants, among whom there were prodigious and prolonged divisions, doubts, and searchings of heart. The ablest of his physicians, though the youngest, expressed his entire conviction that were the king told what his malady was, the news would be his death-blow. It was at last determined to let him guess it—a courtly compromise for court consciences ill at ease.

In the *Religion of the Heart*, the casuistry of the question is mooted, whether in dangerous cases of illness, untrue answers may be given to the sufferers, for fear of increasing the danger. It is urged that, in such extreme cases, the "universal Heart of mankind must be the judge;" and that the man who from his alleged love of truth should sacrifice a patient to the terrors of a nervous fever, would assuredly, from pole to pole, be scouted as a cruel bigot. "It becomes a Religion of the Heart to proclaim such cases exceptional and privileged." The author of the *Letters to Eusebius*, himself a parish priest, as well as a diligent contributor to "Maga," when her monthly contributors were Wilson, De Quincey, Croly, Thomas Hamilton, and the like, once commented poignantly on the distinction that is observed towards the rich, and towards the poor, in apprising them of proximate dissolution. With the former, there is generally great caution used that the sick should not think themselves

going, if it is to be discovered, it is rather in a more delicate attention, a more affectionate look, which the sick cannot at all times distinguish from the ordinary manner. The poor, on the contrary, tell the sick at once, and without any circumlocution, that they will never get over it. Is it that the shock is less to the poor, Mr Eagles asked, and that they have fewer objects in this world for which life might be desirable? But this is sometimes dangerous. And he related a case of a poor woman, a parishioner, whose room he found full of friends and neighbours, all telling her she couldn't last long, and whom the parish doctor reported to be sinking fast, only because she thought she was dying: *he* saw no other reason why she should die, but he could get no one to leave the room. The clergyman's authority was of more avail. He turned all but one out of doors, and then addressed the woman, who was apparently exhausted and speechless. He told her exactly what the surgeon had said, and that she would not die, but be restored to her children and her husband. The woman positively started, raised herself in bed, and said, with an energy of which her visitor had not supposed her capable, "What! am I not dying? shan't I die?—No? Then thank the Lord, I shan't die." The rector gave strict orders that none should be admitted; and the woman did recover, and often thanked him afterwards for having saved her life. "Clergymen should be aware of this propensity in the poor, that, when mischievous, they may counteract it," is the moral he draws from his story.

In a so-called lay sermon for working people, by Dr. John Brown, entitled *The Doctor: His duties to you*, the third head of the discourse enforces the doctor's duty of being true to his patients, true in word and in deed. It insists that he ought to speak nothing but the truth, as to the nature, and extent, and issue of the disease he is treating; but "he is not bound to tell the *whole truth*—that is for his own wisdom and discretion to judge of; only, never let him tell an untruth, and let him be honest enough when he can't say anything definite, to say nothing." As to telling a man he is dying, "The doctor must, in the first place, be sure the patient *is* dying, and,

secondly, that it is for his good, bodily and mental, to tell him so: he should almost always warn the friends, but, even here, cautiously." Philalethes, in the philosophical dialogue on the *Boundaries of Science*, originally published in an early volume of *Macmillan*, comments on his feelings beside the couch of a patient whose decease he foresees to be imminent, but who is to be kept wholly ignorant of the brief period still allowed for preparation; while to himself, scientific looker-on, the contracted limits of the course by which his patient is separated from the great ordeal is matter of absolute certainty. "And yet that knowledge, which for myself I should desire above many added years of life, I must not only *not* communicate to the one so deeply interested, but (within the limit of actual deception) studiously withhold." For, having undertaken to give advice with reference to bodily health, he professes to feel no hesitation as to the neglect of any consideration, however superior in intrinsic importance, that seems calculated to interfere with the object concerning which his advice is sought. His interlocutor Philocalos agrees, so far as to say, "No doubt you are called in as a physician, and you must not, as an honest man, act as a priest," nor would he ask of the physician, in a larger sense, to act otherwise than as a physician, if only he does not forget that the priest also has his appointed place.

The father of Sir William Jones was attacked with a disorder which the sagacity of Dr. Mead at once discovered to be polypus in the heart, and wholly incurable: the alarming secret was communicated to the patient's wife, but she could never be induced to discover it to her husband; and a story is told of her supreme self-command in substituting, upon one occasion, for the contents of a letter of condolence to the doomed man, an imaginary epistle composed by herself at the moment of reading, and in a style so cheerful and entertaining that he was perceptibly the better for it. So in the case of Cowper's friend, Samuel Rose, whose first concern, when informed by his physicians of his danger, was about the shock it must occasion to his wife. But she had known it all long before, and had heroically suppressed

and disguised her feelings, in order, as Hayley words it, to "support the spirits of a declining invalid in a very beneficial illusion."

Adam Smith admiringly reports of his friend David Hume, that when he, the doctor, tried to cheer the dying man with hopes of recovery, he at once pooh-poohed the notion as preposterous; and that, so far from being hurt by the frankness of those friends who talked to him as under sentence of death, he was rather pleased and flattered by it. Dr. Johnson, a few days before his end, was urgent in enjoining Dr. Brocklesby, as an honest man and a physician, to inform him how long he thought he had to live. The reply was in the form of a question: had Johnson firmness to learn the answer? which surely was answer enough, though a more definite one was at once challenged and at once given. Lord North begged his friend and physician, Dr. Warren, not to dissemble with him; and when told, accordingly, that water having formed upon the chest, he could not live many days, and that a few hours might be his limit, he received the news with placid resignation,—continuing, as the manner of the man was, serenely cheerful to the last. Mr Pitt is said to have received from Bishop Tomline the intelligence of his own danger with unexampled firmness. He then turned his head to Sir Walter Farquhar, who stood on the other side of the bed, and said slowly, "How long do you think I have to live?" Sir Walter replied that he could not say, and that perhaps Mr. Pitt might recover. Here the dying statesman smiled, as showing that he well understood the little weight of such a phrase. Like Savile in *Godolphin*, who tells the hesitating leech, "I understand you; you are shy on these points. Never be shy, my good fellow; it is inexcusable after twenty: besides, it is a bad compliment to my nerves—a gentleman is prepared for every event. Sir, it is only a *roturier* whom death, or anything else, takes by surprise. How many hours, then, can I live?"* Everything but truth becomes loathed in a sick-

* Mr. Casaubon, in *Middlemarch*, appeals to his doctor to let him know the truth as to his condition, without reserve. And Lydgate's instinct is

room, affirms the author of *Essays on life* in one. "When the time approaches that I am to die, let me be told that I am to die, and when" Schleiermacher chided the friend who strove to prevent his Frederika's being spoken to of death, composed though she was. "What could be more interesting than to know how such a being contemplated the end of life, and what she felt with regard to it?" Chateaubriand, on the other hand, dwells upon his agony when told by the physician that he thought it right to apprise his patient, Madame de Beaumont, that it was time to prepare her soul for death. The fear of shortening the few moments his sister had yet to live, overwhelmed the Viscount with despair: "I became angry with the physician, and then I begged of him to wait at all events till the next day" The next day, "hardly knowing whether I was alive or not, . . . I burst into tears,

keen enough to tell him that his plain answer, quite free from ostentatious caution, will be felt by his patient as a tribute of respect. A fine description follows of the sensations of a man who now for the first time found himself looking into the eyes of death—who was passing through one of those rare moments of experience when we feel the truth of a commonplace, which is as different from what we call knowing it, as the vision of waters upon the earth is different from the delirious vision of the water which cannot be had to cool the burning tongue. When the commonplace "We must all die" transforms itself suddenly into the acute consciousness "I must die—and soon," then, says George Eliot, death grapples us, and his fingers are cruel; afterwards, he may come to "fold us in his arms as our mother did, and our last moment of dim earthly discerning may be like the first"—*Middlemarch*, Book iv., ch. 42.

Doctor Thorne, in his dealings with Lady Scatcherd, urgent as her appeal was to tell her the truth, "had not the heart" to do so, but mystified the case as doctors so well know how to do, and told her that "there was cause to fear, great cause for fear; he was sorry to say, very great cause for fear," instead of the simple fact that there was not the very faintest pretext for the very feeblest degree of hope.

Mr. Gibson excuses himself, in Mrs. Gaskell's best fiction, for hiding from Osborne Hamley his apprehensions of serious heart disease, by alleging that any alarm about his health would only have hastened the catastrophe. "He would only have been watching his symptoms—accelerating matters, in fact."

Another of our most accomplished masters of fiction, whose favourite basis, however, is matter-of-fact, has worked up into story the real history

and cast myself upon the edge of her bed. She was silent for a moment, looked at me, and then said in a firm tone of voice, as if she wished to impart strength to me, 'I did not think it would have been quite so soon.' Mrs Sheridan put it strictly to Dr Bain, after bidding him lock the door, "You have never deceived me; tell me truly, shall I live over this night?" He felt her pulse, found she was dying, and said, "I recommend you to take some laudanum." She answered, "I understand you; then give it me"—to enable her the better to take leave of her family. Speaking of the duty of not avoiding all allusion to the possible end of sickness, Lady Charlotte Pepys says, "When both watcher and watched have the moral courage to look at both sides of the question, and to meet it fairly and openly, half the sorrow of the illness disappears, confidence is established between them, a consoling confidence in each other's love and strength. And if this is an immense relief to the invalid, it is also a relief to the watcher. There is, of course, still anxious fear, but less than when all mention of the subject is avoided." Otherwise-minded was Moore, when he so jealously guarded against the

of Mistress Margaret Woffington, whose declining days are as pathetically, as her brilliant ones are vivaciously, described. We see and hear her consulting Dr Bowdler—a man whose profession and experience had not steeled his heart as they "generally do, and must do." He could not bring himself to tell her the sad truth, so he asked her for pen and paper, and said he would write a prescription to Mr —, to whom he in fact wrote, not a prescription, but a few lines begging him to convey the cruel intelligence, by degrees, and with care and tenderness. "It is all we can do for her," he said—He looked so grave while writing the supposed prescription, that it occurred to his patient to look over him. She stole archly behind him, and, with a smile on her face—read her death-warrant—It was a cruel stroke! A gasping sigh broke from her. At this Dr Bowdler looked up, and to his horror saw the sweet face he had doomed to the tomb looking earnestly and anxiously at him, and very pale and grave. He was shocked, and, strange to say, she, whose death-warrant he had signed, ran and brought him a glass of wine, for he was quite overcome. Then she gave him her hand in her own sweet way, and bade him not grieve for her, for she was not afraid to die, and had long ago learned that "life is a walking shadow, a poor player, that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is seen no more."

last moments of his daughter being disturbed by the least sign in her presence of alarm or sorrow. Legh Richmond, in the case of his dying son Wilberforce, appears to have sanctioned the physician's resolve not to discourage him by a disclosure of his real state—so important was it considered that he should cultivate cheerfulness of temper. And in the instance of a married daughter, who died a few years later, we find it said that, on her inquiring if there was danger, the family, "in compliance with the strict injunctions of the medical man," discouraged her questionings, and tried to draw her mind to other subjects. The late Dr James Hamilton, in a letter describing the death of his sister Mary, mentions that she was "probably never aware of the likely termination of her trouble, nor was it needful or desirable that she should." Of course there are numerous instances in which, all question of religious motive apart, it is on merely prudential grounds physically expedient that the patient should be made aware of his condition. As with the distinguished artist William Collins, for example, whose doctor, having discovered in him organic disease of the heart, which might be rendered fatal in an instant by sudden emotion or too violent exercise, warned him of his state, nor did the revelation produce in the doomed man the slightest depression on his own account. Miscellaneous biography is rife with examples, in either sex, of this serene acceptance of the sentence of death. One more such we may cite in the person of the youngest Miss Brontë, the Acton Bell of authorship, who, when a physician was sent for, begged him to say how long he thought she might live—he was "not to be afraid to speak the truth, for *she* was not afraid to die." The doctor reluctantly admitted that the angel of death was already arrived, and that life was ebbing fast. She thanked him for his truthfulness; and seemed even more sweetly tranquil and trustful than before. One of Richardson's pattern people, and of the gentler sex, asks upbraidingly why one's friends should take upon themselves to keep one in the dark as to matters of instant individual import. There is, she complains, a tenderness sometimes shown at critical moments, that gives as much

pain as we could receive from the most explicit communication. Nor does she fail to protest against the assumption of so much strength of mind and discretion on the part of the reticent friend, and of corresponding weakness in the person who is to be kept in ignorance. But our leave-taking of the vexed question may be best effected, perhaps, in the words of fine old Thomas Fuller, as wise for the most part as he was witty. His type of the Good Physician is one who "brings not news, with a false spy, that the coast is clear, till death surprises the sick man. I know physicians love to make the best of their patient's estate. first, say they, it is improper that *adjutores vitæ* should be *nunci mortis*, secondly, none with their goodwill will tell bad news; thirdly, their fee may be the worse for it, fourthly, it is confessing their art beaten, fifthly, it will poison their patient's heart with grief. So far well; but they may so order it, that the party may be informed wisely, and not outed of this world before he is provided for another."

§ III.

VETERAN VICTOR, FOILED ONCE AND FOR ALL

"The painful warrior famoused for fight,
After a thousand victories once foiled,
Is from the book of honour ras'd quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toiled "

SHAKESPEARE'S *Sonnets*, xlv

THIS image of the veteran victor, who, foiled once, is forgotten for ever—whose thousand victories at least, if not himself, are thus forgotten—is well known to many who of Shakspeare's *Sonnets* know almost nothing else.

The poet's "over-daring Talbot hath sullied all the gloss of former honour, by one unheedful, desperate, wild adventure." Rivarol says of Mithridates,

"Ce vainqueur des Romains, par les Romains vaincu,
S'écriait en mourant qu'il avait trop vécu ;
Et telle est des humains la triste destinée !"

The *trop vécu* comes out in Dryden's Tancred, who, "protracting life, have lived a day too long;" and so his Theseus, "'Tis best to die, our honour at the height;" as again of Cromwell he says in the memorial ode,—

"Nor died he when his ebbing fame went less,
But when fresh laurels courted him to live" *

* It has been said of Lamartine, that had a random shot struck him in front of the Hôtel de Ville when he calmed the excited multitude in the crisis of the February revolution, he would have gone down to posterity as one of the greatest names in history. "Few climbed so high, few have sunk so low" Many a good man has reason, sooner or later, to say with Macbeth, "Had I but died an hour before this chance, I had lived a blessed time." Elskine was told by "an Elector of Westminster," in a celebrated letter, referring back twenty years to his triumph in the State Trials of 1794, "My lord, you should have died when you descended from the triumph of that memorable day" And Earl Stanhope, quoting the words, utters a confirmatory "Alas ! for what scenes of failure and of folly was this great career prolonged !" Corneille's Don Diego utters *his* Helas ! with due rhetorical emphasis

"qu'un long age apprête aux hommes généreux,
Au bout de leur carrière, un destin malheureux !
Moi, dont les longs travaux ont acquis tant de gloire,
Moi, que jadis partout a suivi la victoire,
Je me vois aujourd'hui, pour avoir trop vécu,
Recevoir un affront et demeurer vaincu "

The changes are wrung on *trop vécu* by another of Corneille's heroes—a young one, this time, the younger Horace

"La mort seule aujourd'hui peut conserver ma gloire
Encor la fallait-il si tôt que j'eus vaincu,
Puisque pour mon honneur j'ai déjà trop vécu "

Many a blighted career might be personified in the plaint of the psalmist "Thou hast taken away the edge of his sword, and givest him not victory in the battle. Thou hast put out his glory, and cast his throne down to the ground. The days of his youth hast thou shortened, and covered him with dishonour." After telling how the fame of Gratian culminated before he was twenty, Gibbon goes on to say, "But he survived his reputation" So again, in a later volume, he says of the Gothic prince whose reign he has brilliantly described, "But the life of Theodoric was too long, since he lived to condemn the virtue of Boethius and Symmachus." *Ah madame, pour moi j'ai vécu trop d'un jour*, is the style of Racine's Burrhus. The French poet Rousseau—meaning Jean-Baptiste, not Jean-Jacques, though the latter may have been rather the born poet of the two

Plutarch pictures Pompey, after Pharsalia, wrapt up in such thoughts as we may suppose a man to have who had been used for thirty-four years to conquer and carry all before him; and now in his old age first came to know what it was to be defeated and to fly. Well may Butler exclaim,

“Ay me ! what perils do environ
The man that meddles with cold iron !
What plaguy mischiefs and mishaps
Do dog him still with after-claps !
For though dame Fortune seem to smile,
And leer upon him for awhile,
She'll after show him, in the nick
Of all his glories, a dog-tick,”

and straightway all his glories are whistled down the wind. Swift, in the Drapier's Letters, cites approvingly the conduct

—moralizes with something of force as well as fluency on this theme of *de trop* :—

“Au faite des honneurs, un vainqueur indomptable
Voit souvent ses lauriers se flétrir dans ses mains.
La mort, la seule mort met le sceau véritable
Aux grandeurs des humains

“Combien avons-nous vu d'eloges unanimes
Condamnés, démentis par un honteux retour !
Et combien de héros glorieux, magnanimes,
Ont vécu trop d'un jour !”

Now and then in latter-day autobiography we come upon regretful recognition of this *de trop*. Sir Samuel Romilly, recording in his journal a critical illness he had in the winter of 1814-15, observes “If it had ended in death, perhaps, as far as concerns myself, it had been fortunate. My life had then been one of unchequered prosperity,” cheered and animated, he hoped, through the whole of it, by the exertion of his best powers, and in the pursuit of no unworthy objects. The English Opium-eater, again,—what record bare he of himself in 1839? “There were long years, through which Southey might respect me, I *him*. But the years came—for I have lived too long, reader, in relation to many things; and the report of me would have been better, or more uniform at least, had I died some twenty years ago—the years came in which circumstances made me an Opium-eater; years through which a shadow as of sad eclipse sat and rested on my faculties.” But this passage, as it occurs in the *Autobiography*, as originally published, is omitted—for in the interval many years had elapsed—from the collected Works.

of the Romans, who, when a question was in the Senate, whether they should ransom the veterans who had merited much by their former victories, but losing one battle were taken prisoners,—followed the advice of Regulus not to redeem them, as men unworthy their further care, though probably it was their misfortune, not their fault, lost that one day. Bertrand du Guesclin was successful in nearly every engagement with the English, and was afterwards employed in Bretagne with equal honour, but reverses came, and then calumny, and then dudgeon, and resignation of the command, and implacable resentment. Not until his last campaign did fortune abandon Carmagnola, but once foiled, he was ruined once for all, and he died by the hand of the headsman in the square of St. Mark, after being put to the torture, while yet in anguish from the wounds he had received in the service of the ungrateful republic. It was of another republic Napoleon was speaking when he said, in 1801, that Fortune had hitherto smiled on her, but might frown anon; for how many has Fortune overwhelmed with her favours, who yet “have lived too long by a few years!” There is a home-spoken moral in Cowper’s homely stanzas on the Cock-fighter’s discarded favourite —

“One feather’d champion he possess’d,
His darling far beyond the rest,
Which never knew disgrace,
Nor e’er had fought, but he made flow
The life-blood of his fiercest foe,
The Cæsar of his race.

“It chanced, at last, when, on a day,
He push’d him to a desperate fray,
His courage droop’d, he fled
The master storm’d, the prize was lost,
And, instant, frantic at the cost,
He doom’d his favourite dead.”

By one pusillanimous act, as Gibbon regards it, though Mr Finlay takes another view, Justiniani, wounded—and to that wound is traced the immediate loss of Constantinople—
“stained the honours of a military life, and the few days

which he survived in Galata, or the isle of Chios, were embittered by his own and the public reproach." Mr Grote's narrative of the death of the Dictator of Syracuse who called Plato friend, has this sentence towards the close of it. "Thus perished Dion, having lived only about a year after his expulsion of the Dionysian dynasty—but a year too long for his own fame." Certainly, affirms Jeremy Taylor, every wise man will easily believe that it had been better the Macedonian kings should have died in battle, than protract their life so long till some of them came to be scriveners and joiners at Rome; or that the "tyrant of Sicily better had perished in the Adriatic, than to be wafted to Corinth safely, and there turn schoolmaster." Happy had it been for Pompey, by Cicero's reckoning, had he died in that sickness when all Italy was putting up vows and prayers for his recovery; or if he had fallen, by the chance of war, on the plains of Pharsalia.

When Joan of Arc, hitherto so uniformly triumphant, failed to bring the French troops to a successful assault on Paris, in September 1429, she seemed to be convinced that this stern check before the walls of the city must ruin her beyond all hope. She withdrew, says Michelet, "cursed by her own side, by the French, as well as by the English." It is of the Dance of Death, as danced a few years previously, as the same historian describes it, by Lewis of Orleans and John the Fearless, by Henry V and Charles VI, that Michelet remarks, Had Death been upbraided with these mockeries of his, he would have been at no loss for a reply. he might have answered that when all was said, he had hardly cast off any but those who had ceased to live: "The conqueror had died at the very moment when his conquest was drooping, and could make no further progress" *Tempus est abire*. Well had it been for the octogenarian Carbajal, on Mr. Prescott's showing, had he persisted in his refusal to take command under Pizarro. The veteran victor of the battle of Chupas "yielded to the importunities of his friend; and the short space that yet remained to him of life proved long enough to brand his memory with perpetual infamy." Of Alexander Farnese, when forced, in 1588, to raise the siege of Bergen, Mr. Motley writes. "The

hero of a hundred battle-fields, the inventive and brilliant conqueror of Antwerp, seemed in the deplorable issue of the English invasion to have lost all his genius, all his fortune." A cloud fell upon the fame of him who now saw himself, at the head of the best army in Europe, compelled to retire, defeated and humiliated, from the walls of Bergen.

If Henry VIII. had died previous to the first agitation of his divorce, his loss would have been deplored, Mr. Froude is persuaded, as one of the heaviest misfortunes which had ever befallen the country, and he would have left a name to take its place in history by the side of that of the Black Prince or of the conqueror of Agincourt. The Young Chevalier should have died in the Highlands, instead of surviving to be what he eventually became. Death would then have made his story complete, as one historical critic contends; but death is not apt to come when its presence would complete and perfect the round of life. Charles lived as Napoleon lived, as men live every day after existence is over for them, surviving to add some vulgar or pitiful protest to the tragedy which might have been completed so grandly,—a sequel more tragically instructive, perhaps more painful and appalling, than that brief and solemn dropping of the curtain which follows a well-timed death. "I should have died, if not at Moscow, at latest at Waterloo," said Napoleon at St. Helena. Like thoughts have their admirers had in regard of Montrose, all whose *éclat* one reverse of fortune sufficed to dissipate; and one day after his defeat, the conqueror of Scotland was, in Guizot's language, "nothing but an audacious outlaw;" or of Charles the Twelfth, who, after having raised his military glory to the greatest height, lost by the single battle of Pultawa all the fruits of his former successes, and wasted his best years as a fugitive and suppliant at the mercy of the Porte; or of Dumouriez, when the *dénouement* of the political and military drama which in three years had raised him to the height of the greatest men, caused him suddenly to descend to the level of the most miserable adventurer. The Napoleon of St. Helena is forcibly contrasted by Macaulay with that Cromwell who, if he did not carry the banners of

the Commonwealth in triumph to distant capitals, nor adorn Whitehall with the spoils of the Stadthouse and the Louvre, nor portion out Flanders and Germany into principalities for his kinsmen and his generals, neither did he, on the other hand, see his country overrun by the armies of nations which his ambition had provoked ; nor drag out the last years of his life an exile and a prisoner, raging with the impotent desire of vengeance, and brooding over visions of departed glory. Southey argues, in the *Life of Nelson*, that had his hero, in June 1798, overtaken the French fleet, with Napoleon on board, of the myriads of human beings who would have been preserved by that day's victory, to not one of them would such essential benefits have resulted as to Bonaparte himself ; for it would have spared him his defeat at Acre, and all his after-enormities "Hitherto his career had been glorious" History would have represented him as a soldier of fortune, who had faithfully served the cause in which he engaged, and whose career had been distinguished by a series of successes unexampled in modern times. "A romantic obscurity would have hung over the expedition to Egypt, and he would have escaped the perpetration of those crimes which have incarnadined his soul with a deeper dye than that of the purple for which he committed them." Nelson, again, is himself the text for homilies on the risk of calling any man good, any more than happy, till we have seen the last of him ; for his very ending may be enough to blight all his past life. "As regards fame, the right thing is an end like Nelson's," a divine of our day observes. "Il aurait dû mourir ce jour-là pour la gloire," some French critics say of Marmont, re-entering Paris covered with dust, and "frémissant de l'émotion du combat," in that *dernier combat* of 1814 Sainte-Beuve differs*

* Sainte-Beuve it is, too, who expresses a demur to Algarotti's verdict on Molière, that he did not understand a *dénouement* as well as Cæsar, and that he ought to have had the wit to get himself disposed of the moment his glory culminated, as Cæsar did, just when about to risk *his* glory by a war with Parthia,—dying *la montre à la main*. Molière too, the later and greater critic maintains, died *la montre à la main*, at the height of his glory, and before it began to decline. Molière's vocation

from the critics, so far as to say it was better that Marmont should live, to show what misfortune, and the force of circumstances, and a sort of fatality attached to a distinguished career, may bring about

The Wallenstein of Schiller, as dark days gather round him, deems the younger Piccolomini happy in dying just when and how he did.

“He is more fortunate. His end is come.
For him there is no longer any future
His life is bright—bright without spot it *was*,
And cannot cease to be. No ominous hour
Knocks at his door with tidings of mishap ”

§ IV

OLD WOUNDS REOPENED

“And weep afresh love’s long-since cancell’d woe ”

SHAKESPEARE’S *Sonnets*, xxx.

THIS, among other penalties, the poet had to pay for summoning up remembrance of things past, to the sessions of sweet silent thought,—the weeping afresh of a long-since cancelled woe, the grieving of grievances foregone,

would have predisposed him to sympathize with the sorrows of that sexagenarian knight of old Rome, Laberius, whom Cæsar, on the occasion of his quadruple triumph, thought fit to order to compete with Syrus on the stage *Nimirum hoc die Uno plus vixi mihi quam vivendus fuit*. Goldsmith has Englished the prologue of Laberius, as preserved by Macrobius; and from Goldsmith’s version may be preserved the couplet—

“But this vile hour disperses all my store,
And all my hoard of honour is no more ”

A more exact translator may be cited for the closing lines :

“So then, albeit I’ve lived twice thirty years
Free from all taint of blame, I left my house
At morn a Roman Knight, and shall return
At eve a sorry Player. ’Faith, my life
Is one day longer than it should have been ”

“And heavily from woe to woe tell o’er
The sad account of foie-bemoanèd moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before”

The woes were not dead, but sleeping The grief was not cancelled, after all, in the old, old days when it ought to have died out and been done with As Juliet says of a more recent trouble, whose presence is not to be put by, “I would forget it fain, but O! it presses to my memory like damnèd guilty deeds to sinners’ minds” Byron forcibly and feelingly describes how

“ever and anon of griefs subdued
There comes a token like a scorpion’s sting,
Scarce seen, but with fiesh bitterness imbued;
And slight withal may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
Aside for ever. it may be a sound—
A tone of music,—summer’s eve—or spring,
A flower—the wind—the ocean—which shall wound,
Stiking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound”

The wounded limb, says Ovid, shudders at even a gentle touch: “*membra reformidant mollem quoque saucia tactum*” It was a suggestive experience, that of Captain Cook’s men off Cape Horn, when the wounds of veterans received more than fifty years before, broke out afresh as if they had never been healed. “I am now certain that my wound will never close,” writes Mrs Trench, in one of her letters to her husband, referring to their common loss,—“though it only throbs and pains at intervals But every agitation revives in me the sense of my loss, even those of a pleasurable kind” And she likens herself to a man who bears in his breast the weapon which has wounded him, and who, when quite still, does not always feel it, but the least movement makes it a torment. One of the *pensées* of a finished master of the expression of them, runs thus: “Il y a des moments où la vie, le fond de la vie se rouvre au dedans de nous comme une plaie qui seigne et ne veut pas se fermer.” Chateaubriand, in his memoirs, speaks of himself as singularly constituted as regards resentment: at the first moment of an offence he scarcely felt it, but it became engraven in his memory; the

remembrance of it, in place of decreasing, augmented with time ; it would slumber in his heart and memory for whole years, and then awaken at the slightest circumstance with renewed force, and his wound became more open and painful than it was the first day. In his chapter on Retention, Locke speaks of hidden ideas as sometimes starting up in our minds of their own accord—roused and tumbled out of their dark cells, into open daylight, by turbulent and tempestuous passion. Shelley, in the *Prometheus Unbound*, has an image of

“ a thought which makes
Unwonted tears spring to the horny eyes,
And beatings haunt the desolated heart,
Which should have learnt repose ”

Le feu qui semble éteint souvent dort sous la cendre, as Rodogune says Wordsworth is interested, even to perplexity, by the cheery matron of Jedborough and her husband—

“ The more I look'd, I wonder'd more ,
And, while I scann'd them o'er and o'er,
Some inward trouble suddenly
Broke from the matron's strong black eye—
A remnant of uneasy light,
A flash of something over-bright.”

The cleverly-told story of *Wheat and Tares* comes to an end with this mention of its heroine, that notwithstanding her sustained character for geniality, warm heart, and high spirit, there now and then escaped her some word of dejection, a sigh of weariness, a look of despair, eloquent of pangs of remembrance, the solution to which problem is found in a letter that for years has lain deep hid in the farthest recess of Rachel's desk.

“ Ah, forgotten things
Stumble back strangely ' and the ghost of June
Stands by December's fire, cold, cold ! and puts
The last spark out ”

So muses the author of the *Wanderer*. And the lines of Mr Coventry Patmore ring in harmony (But query two *thicks* in rhyme ?):

"Yet even now not seldom, in my leisure, in the thick
Of other thoughts, unchallenged, words and looks come crowding
thick [?]
They do while I am writing, till the sunshine makes me sick"

Speculating on the possible reason for Coleridge's "eternal self-banishment" from the Lake country, the scenes of which he so well understood in all their shifting forms of beauty, Mr de Quincey conjectures that it may have been the very opposite reason to that which is most obvious not, possibly, because he had become indifferent to their attractions, but because his undecaying sensibility to their commanding power had become associated with too afflicting remembrances, and flashes of personal recollections, suddenly restored and illuminated—recollections which will "sometimes leap from hiding-places ten years deep," and bring into collision the present with some long-forgotten past, in a form too trying and too painful for endurance. "Wae's me!" sighs Mistress Margaret Maitland, "but it is a strangely formed thing, that tenderest part of us we call the heart, for even when folk get up into years, and grow in a manner hardened to the adversities of the world, there are aye old stounds and by-past remembrances that strike up through it sorely, when no mortal eye can see" So again Mr Dickens comments on the existence of "strange chords in the human heart," which will lie silent through years of depravity and wickedness, but will vibrate at last to some slight circumstance apparently trivial in itself, but connected, by some undefined and indistinct association, with past days that can never be recalled, and with bitter memories from which the most degraded of creatures cannot escape. A philosophic discourser on the art of forgetting, suggests how fine a thing it would be to have acquired entire control over that function of the mind, so that whatever was done with might be consciously and finally dismissed, and laid like a ghost in the Red Sea "The provoking thing is the way that recollections have of disappearing for a time, and emerging again just as they are not wanted." There are some wounds, it has been said, which never quite heal: the jagged flesh may

reunite, cooling medicines may subdue the inflammation, even the scar left by the dagger-thrust may wear away, until it disappears in the gradual transformation which every atom of us is supposed by physiologists to undergo; but the wound "has been," and to the last hour of our lives there are unfavourable winds which make us wince with the old pain. "Philosophy may give its styptics, and religion its balm, but there are some wounds," as the Slickville sage words it, "that may heal over and get cicatrized, and seem all right again, but still are so tender, you can't bear to touch them without wincing; and every now and then they open of themselves, like old scars do in the scurvy, and bleed, and throb, and ache; oh, how they ache!" As Racine's agitated heroine confesses to her confidante:

"J'ai revu l'ennemi que j'avais éloigné,
Ma blessure trop vive aussitôt a saigné"

One of Charlotte Brontë's letters refers to one just received from a friend, which she had only once ventured to read—it "ripped up half-scarred wounds with such terrible force," in reminding her of family separations. As in Waller's verses on a speaking likeness, at the sight of which, in Vandyck's colouring, one

"who did long refrain,
Feels his old wound bleed fresh again
With dear remembrance of that face."

When Colonel Newcome warmed towards young Ethel, and, stooping down, kissed the little white hand, after clearing the grizzled moustache from his mouth, although there was no point of resemblance, there was yet a something in the girl's look, voice, and movements which caused his heart to thrill, and an image out of the past to float before his dimmed eyes. People in fever begin suddenly to talk the language of their infancy; and so are we "stricken by memory sometimes, and old affections rush back on us as vivid as in the time when they were our daily talk, when their presence gladdened our eyes, when their accents thrilled in our ears, when with passionate tears and grief we flung ourselves upon their hopeless

corpses" If in after-days, when your grief is dead and buried, you revisit the scenes in which it was your companion, how its ghost rises and shows itself again! Petrarch describes himself at Avignon walking through the well-known neighbourhoods, and reminded by the mute aspect of each familiar spot of former vain illusions, when and where Laura was, who now was not;—suddenly stopping, stupefied, and with difficulty refraining from tears. Then, "the old wounds opening anew," he fled, owning to himself that he felt in his heart the workings of his ancient enemy, death hovered there. Absence and death, how differ they! and yet, in some points of sad resemblance, how much too close the resemblance is! Jeffrey details, in one of his letters, the eerie sensations that came over and overcame him, when occasion renewed that "miss" of his daughter, which fell so heavily on his heart the first night after her quitting him for a new home, and which now "came back so darkly, that I was obliged to shut myself in, and cry over the recollection, as if all the interval had been annihilated, and *that* loss and sorrow were still fresh and unsubdued before me." Tasso's simile, in the Fairfax version, has its human counterpart,—

"As Ægean's seas, when storms be calm'd again
That roll'd their tumbling waves with troublous blast,
Do yet of tempests past some show retain,
And here and there their swelling billows cast"

There is a face of George Eliot's painting, at which one has a sense of uneasiness in gazing, a hushed expression is upon it, out of keeping with the resistant energy, the pent-up heat, which one expects to flash out in a sudden passionate glance, that will dissipate all the quietude, like a damp fire leaping out again when all seemed safe.

"As one who, awaked unawares, would put back
The sleep that for ever returns in the track
Of dreams which, though scared and dispersed, not the less
Settle back to faint eyelids that yield 'neath their stress"

§ V.

TIME THE DESTROYER

"O fearful meditation ! where, alack,
 Shall time's best jewel from time's chest lie hid ?
 Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back ?
 Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid ?"

SHAKSPEARE'S *Sonnets*, lxx

IN sonnet after sonnet, Shakspeare bewails and commemorates the ruthless ravages of Time. "Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth, and delves the parallels in beauty's brow ; feeds on the rarities of nature's truth, and nothing stands but for his scythe to mow." The poet tells how he has seen by Time's fell hand defaced "the rich-proud cost of outworn buried age ;" has seen lofty towers and eternal brass cast down, and the hungry ocean gaining on the shore ; "nor gates of steel so strong, but time decays" Elsewhere he had termed it Time's glory to "ruinate proud dwellings with his hour, and smear with dust their glittering golden towers ,

"To fill with worm-holes stately monuments ;
 To feed oblivion with decay of things ;
 To blot old books, and alter their contents ;
 To pluck the quills from ancient ravens' wings ,
 To dry the old oak's sap," etc.

And one of the sonnets, again, begins with the conditional sanction, "Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws, and make the earth devour her own sweet brood ; pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws, and burn the long-lived phoenix in her blood." In *Troilus and Cressida* the faithless daughter of Calchas imagines a possible, and yet an all-but-impossible, period when Time shall be so old as to have forgot himself, when waterdrops shall have worn the stones of Troy, and blind oblivion swallowed cities up, and mighty states shall, without memorial left of them, be grated to dusty nothing.

Dr. Young once told the world plainly, that—

"Time's a god.

Hast thou ne'er heard of Time's omnipotence ?

For, or against, what wonders can he do¹
 And will to stand blank neuter he disdains."

For, or against. *Omnia fert ætas, aufert omnia secum.* But Archbishop Whately had no patience with these personifications of Time as an agent. He loved to quote Bishop Copleston's *dictum*, "Time is no agent," and to insist that when we speak of such and such a change being brought about *by* time, we mean *in* time,—by the gradual and imperceptible operation of some gentle agency. "But we are so much influenced by our own use of language, that, though no one can doubt, when the question is put before him, that effects are produced not *by* time, but *in* time, we are accustomed to represent Time as armed with a scythe, and mowing down all before him." It has been remarked of Shakspeare that Time seems to have penetrated his imagination as a kind of grim and hideous personal existence, cruel out of mere malevolence of nature. So Heraclitus of old, believing all things the subject of incessant change, had his life and conversation tinged with a melancholy which became proverbial through antiquity. Shakspearian to the full in this antipathy was Edmund Spenser, as where, describing the fleet fading of the fair flower of beauty, he adds:

"Great enemy to it, and to all the rest
 That in the garden of Adonis springs,
 Is wicked Time, who with his scyth addrest
 Does mow the flowring herbes and goodly things,
 And all their glory to the ground down flings,
 Where they do wither and are fowly mar'd
 He flies about, and with his flaggy wings
 Beates downe both leaves and buds without regard,
 Ne ever pittie may relent his malice hard"

That Time makes such short work of it with beauty, is, with Shakspeare in the Sonnets, the head and front of his offending. In other poems, he stigmatizes the ravager as himself ugly, and the associate of what is ugly, because of these his ugly ravages: "Misshapen Time, copesmate [companion] of ugly night," "eater of youth," "showing the beldam daughters of her daughter;" and the plea is urged

upon him, consciously in vain, "O carve not with thy hours
my love's fair brow, Nor draw no lines there with thine
antique pen" He knew as well at least as Ovid that

"Ista decens facies longis vitabitur annis,
Rugaque in antiquâ fronte senilis erit"

It is little matter, wrote Byron, "what becomes of us
'bearded men,' but I don't like the notion of a beautiful
woman lasting less than a beautiful tree—than her own
picture—her own shadow, which won't change so to the sun
as her face to the mirror." His comparative estimate of tree
life may put us in mind of Cowper and Yardley Oak: "Time
hath made thee what thou art—a cave for owls to roost in."
"At last the rottenness which Time is charged to inflict on
other mighty ones, found also thee."

"Thus to Time

The task was left to whittle thee away
With his sly scythe, whose ever-nibbling edge,
Noiseless, an atom and an atom more
Disjoining from the rest, has, unobserved,
Achieved a labour which had, far and wide,
By man perform'd, made all the forest ring"

As by Cowper his scythe, so by Sir Henry Taylor in *Isaac
Comnenus*, is Time's sand-glass duly provided and portrayed
—for Comnenus wends his way in fancy to the rippled sands
whence footprints of the beloved have so soon been effaced.
a thousand tides and storms have dashed them out; winds
brushed them, and waves worn them; and o'er all, "the heavy
foot of Time, who plods the shore, replenishing his sand-glass,
trodden down their vestiges and mine."—Cowper's Poplars are
as popular as his Oak, but they were felled. The Poplar is,
however, the subject of some Ingoldsby stanzas, which lament
the tamperings of Time with the letters carved on the bark—
Georgina's name in love letters, now grown all askew:

"Ay, here stands the Poplar, so tall and so stately,
On whose tender rind—'twas a little one then—
We carved her initials; though not very lately—
We think in the year eighteen hundred and ten

* * * *

“ Alas ! how the soul sentimental it vexes
 That thus on our labours stein Chronos should frown ,
 Should change our soft liquids to izzards and Xes,
 And turn true-love’s alphabet all upside-down ! ”

The moral of Waller’s song of a fading rose is, the common fate of all things rare—“ how small a part of time they share, that are so wondrous sweet and fair.” One of Cowper’s letters to a long unseen kinswoman speculates on what impressions Time may have made on her person ; for while his claws strike deep furrows in some faces, he seems to sheath them with much tenderness, as if fearful of doing injury, in others. “ But though an enemy to the person, he is a friend to the mind ; ” in which respect, however, his treatment of us confessedly depends upon what he meets with at our hands

In one sense, and within certain limits, the touches of Time confessedly add to the picturesque in painting. Poetical licence Dryden found, and took, to wind up his complimentary epistle to Sir Godfrey Kneller with the assurance that Time shall

“ with his ready pencil stand,
 Retouch your figure with his ripening hand,
 Mellow your colours, and imbrown the tint,
 Add every grace which Time alone can grant ;
 To future ages shall your fame convey,
 And give more beauties than he takes away ”

It is the doctrine of the Shakspearian Ulysses that beauty, wit, high birth, vigour of bone, desert in service, love, friendship, charity, are subjects all to “ envious and calumniating Time.” Hood is emulating Shakspeare’s tone as well as theme, in his *Plea of the Midsummer Fairies*, when he introduces on the scene a gaunt giant, with bloody jaws, and frost upon his crown, and with one hoary lock falling far over his wrinkled front from his barren poll, and bearing a bright and crescent blade “ upon a mast rear’d far aloft,” and whose foggy breath blurred out the landscape like a flight of smoke, while his dreadful look set all the small people flying,—“ but who *can* fly that ancientest of kings ? ” Swift puts among his riddles this versicle on Time :

“ Ever eating, never cloying,
 All-devouring, all-destroying,
 Never finding full repast
 Till I eat the world at last.”

In Wordsworth we have him as one “that saps the individual’s bodily frame, and lays the generations low in dust.” To him might be almost applied, in regard to man, what the patriarch addressed to the Maker of both. Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth: Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away. Mr Matthew Arnold speaks of Time, with the ceaseless stroke of his wings brushing off the bloom from men’s soul, clouding and making dim their eye, and languid their heart. That old gravedigger, whose churchyard is the earth, Lord Lytton calls him—whose trade is to find burial-places for passions that seemed immortal, who in the bloom of the fairest affection detects the hectic that consumes it. “Wherever is the sepulchre, there is thy temple, O melancholy Time!” Sepulchral columns themselves, as Blair of the *Grave* has it, “wrestle but in vain with all-subduing Time. his cankering hand with calm deliberate malice wasteth them.” More complacently, if not cheerfully, Hartley Coleridge pays him this compliment, that

“ Time, the master, his own work concealing,
 Decks every grave with verdure and with flowers.”

What does not fade? asks Armstrong. And having started the question, he proceeds to reply to it by telling how the tower that long had stood the crash of thunder and the warring winds,

“ Shook by the slow but sure destroyer, Time,
 Now hangs in doubtful ruins o’er its base.
 And flinty pyramids, and walls of brass,
 Descend the Babylonian spires are sunk;
 Achaia, Rome, and Egypt moulder down.
 Time shakes the stable tyranny of thrones,
 And tottering empires rush by their own weight.”

Byron’s execrations of Time as the Destroyer are cordial and frequent enough. In *Childe Harold* he sings how Paphos

all by Time—"accursed Time! the queen who conquers all must yield to thee" And in a later canto he apostrophizes as more eloquent than Cicero that nameless column with the buried base,—

"Titus or Trajan's? No—'tis that of Time
Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth displace
Scoffing"

So in the *Siege of Corinth* we are pointed to a ruined temple, fashioned by long-forgotten hands, "two or three columns, and many a stone, marble and granite, with grass o'ergrown,"—which is made a text for the outcry,

"Out upon Time! it will leave no more
Of the things to come than the things before!
Out upon Time! who for ever will leave
But enough of the past for the future to grieve
O'er that which hath been, and o'er that which must be:
What we have seen, our sons shall see;
Remnants of things that have pass'd away,
Fragments of stone, rear'd by creatures of clay!"

It is a theme that Scott, no less than Byron, loved to harp on, as in his sketch of the ancient Hall of Rokeby, whose battlements and turrets gray seemed half-abandoned to decay. "on barbican and keep of stone, stern Time the foeman's work had done." But it marks, perhaps, something of Scott's difference from Byron as a poet, as well as a man, that he in another canto is fain thus to moralize his song:

"So flits the world's uncertain span!
Nor zeal for God, nor love to man,
Gives mortal monuments a date
Beyond the power of Time and Fate
The towers must share the builder's doom;
Ruin is theirs, and his a tomb:
But better boon benignant Heaven
To Faith and Charity has given,
And bids the Christian Hope sublime
Transcend the bounds of Fate and Time."

CHAPTER II.

Among the Poems.

§ I.

TIME THE VINDICATOR.

“Time’s glory is
To unmask falsehood, and bring truth to light ;
To stamp the seal of truth in aged things ;
To wake the morn, and sentinel the night ,
To wrong the wronger till he render right ”

Rape of Lucret.

WHAT Shakspeare thus enforces in the weightiest of his miscellaneous poems, he confirms with iterative emphasis in divers of his plays. Rosalind calls Time the old judge that examines all offenders. It is Queen Margaret’s consolatory conviction that Heaven is just, and Time suppresseth wrongs. Hector adds to his adage, “The end crowns all,” the gloss, “And that old common arbitrator, Time, will one day end it.” The senators from Athens have hope of reconciling Timon; for, if ’twas time and griefs that framed him thus, to outcast life in a cave, “time, with his fairer hand, offering the fortunes of his former days, the former man may make him.” Pisanio says of “all other doubts, by time let them be cleared” And Cordelia can afford to wait until “Time shall unfold what plaited cunning hides.”

We have seen in a previous chapter how prodigal of execration upon Time, as ravager and destroyer, Byron could be. But he could also lavish upon Time, as avenger, rectifier, vindicator, his tributes of grateful homage: he hails in Time,

not only the beautifier of the dead, and adorer of ruins, and comforter and healer of bleeding hearts, but also,

“Time, the corrector where our judgments err,
The test of truth, love,—sole philosopher,
For all besides are sophists, from thy thrift,
Which never loses though it doth defer—
Time, the avenger ! unto thee I lift
My hands, and eyes, and heart.”

One of his letters to Mr. Murray contains the reflection, “It is always thus in the long run,—Time, the Avenger . . . It is an odd world, but the watch has its mainspring after all” Of Lord Bacon as a philosopher it has been said that Time seemed always personated in his imagination, and that with Time he wrestled with a consciousness of triumph. His name and memory he left, in that famous legacy of fame, to foreign nations, “and to mine own countrymen, after some time be past over.” Archdeacon Hare assigns it as one of the consolations of authors of genius that they have the happy feeling of Time being their ally; and they know that hurrying impedes oftener than it accelerates. If a book, destitute of real merit, be forced for a time into reputation, the result is, in Goldsmith’s words, that “Time, the touchstone of what is truly valuable, discovers the fraud :” an author should never, on Oliver’s showing, arrogate to himself any share of success, till his works have been read at least ten years with satisfaction. “Les réputations dans l’opinion publique sont comme des liquides de différents poids dans un même vase. Qu’on agite le vase, on parviendra aisément à mêler les liqueurs ; qu’on le laisse reposer, elles reprendront toutes, lentement et d’elles-mêmes, l’ordre que leurs pesanteurs et la nature leur assignent.” *Χρόνος τὰ πάντα γίγνεται καὶ κρίνεται.*

Geoffrey Crayon consoled himself at Bracebridge Hall with the reflection that, after all, Time is not such an invariable destroyer as he is represented ; that if he pulls down, he likewise builds up ; if he impoverishes one, he enriches another ; his very dilapidations furnish matter for new works of controversy, and his rust is more precious, to literary antiquaries, than the most costly gilding. Saint-Evremond was

accustomed, he said, to hear himself censured without reason, and his system was, after a slight justification, because he would not incense the world by too much argument, to wait patiently for time to set him right; for, "in truth, there is more to be expected from time than from reason." It is propounded as one set-off against the Calamities of Authors, that Time, the great autocrat, if in his tremendous march he destroys authors, also annihilates critics; that he lifts up some authors who are down, fixing them in their proper place, and by dint of daily diminishing the weight of unjust criticism, he restores the injured author to his full honours. A poet of the last generation essayed to solace an unappreciated contemporary with the reassuring assurance,

"Time, slow to foster things of lesser worth,
Broods o'er thy work, and God permits no waste."

'Time is like art, says M de Pontmartin, in that it places men and events at their right point of view, and effects a due distribution of light and shade. Southey took comfort in the thought, believing himself injured,—

"Injuries there are which Time redresseth best,
Being more sure in judgment, though perhaps
Slower in process even than the court
Where justice, tortoise-footed and mole-eyed,
Sleeps undisturb'd, fann'd by the lulling wings
Of harpies at their prey. We soon live down
Evil or good report, if undeserved"

Mr. John Stuart Mill somewhere quotes with approbation the words of Lamartine, that Time seems to be one of the elements of truth itself: to demand the ultimate truth of one moment of time, is to demand from the nature of things more than they can give. Madame Guizot once wrote (as Mdle. de Meulan) in *le Publiciste*, "que le temps seul ramène les hommes à la raison et à vérité; mais que la raison et la vérité n'ont presque jamais convaincu personne." Describing the nimbus of renown and preternatural astonishment that so enveloped Cagliostro as to enchant the general eye, Mr. Carlyle adds: "The few reasoning mortals scattered here and

there who see through him, deafened in the universal hubbub, shut their lips in sorrowful disdain, confident in the grand remedy, Time." On the other hand, as he puts it in another place, and to the credit account of quite another order of heroes,—how many are the men, not censured, misjudged, calumniated only, but tortured, crucified, hung on gibbets,—“not as god-devils even, but as devils proper, who have nevertheless grown to seem respectable, or infinitely respectable!” Mr. Kingsley, when he reviewed Sir Walter Raleigh and his times, could not help watching with a smile how “good old Time’s scrubbing-brush, which clears away paint and whitewash from church pillars,” does the same by such characters as Raleigh’s. We may apply to the Muse of History what Pope says of another Muse,—

“’Tis hers, the brave man’s latest steps to trace,
Rejudge his acts, and dignify disgrace.”

§ II.

DROWNED IN KEN OF SHORE

“’Tis double death to drown in ken of shore”

The Rape of Lucrece

WRECKED king and princes in the *Tempest* escaped not only death by drowning, but the double death of drowning in ken of shore. “But was not this nigh shore?” exclaims Prospero, interrupting Ariel’s history of the wreck, and “close by, my master,” is the reply. “But are they, Ariel, safe?” “Not a hair perish’d.” Cowper’s castaway

“bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.”

Dante makes pathetic mention of bark that all her way across the sea ran straight and speedy, to perish at the last, even in the haven’s mouth. *Fe p ris dans le port*, is Chim ne’s bitter cry, in *Le C d*. And the image is repeated in a later scene, when dreary misgivings occur to her and to Rodrigue:

"Que notre heur fût si proche, et sitôt se perdit !
 Et que si près du port, contre toute apparence,
 Un orage si prompt brisât notre espérance !"

So, again, the same great dramatist's Ptolemy warns Cleopatra, touching the object of her regard. "Mais songez qu'au port il peut faire naufrage." Sadly memorable is the fate of the first European whose ashes were deposited in American soil—the Scandinavian Bjorn, who died as his vessel touched the shore. Journalists noted it as one more instance to be added to the list of those who have been stricken down when their hopes were highest, and victory within their grasp,—that of Isambard Kingdom Brunel being seized with paralysis, and carried home to die, the day before the Great Eastern started on her trial voyage "He died," said the *Saturday Review*, "like a homeward-bound sailor, in sight of land." Hazlitt discusses the question why one is always more vexed at losing a game of any sort by a single hole or ace, than if one has never had a chance of winning it; and he takes it to be, no doubt, in part or chiefly because the prospect of success irritates the subsequent disappointment. "People have been known to pine and fall sick from holding the next number to the twenty thousand pounds prize in the lottery. Now this could only arise from their being so near winning in fancy, from there seeming to be so thin a partition between them and success." Browning's Paracelsus bewails the exceeding bitterness of foiled proximity:—

"Ah, the curse, Aprile, Aprile !
 We got so near—so very, very near !
 'Tis an old tale · Jove strikes the Titans down,
 Not when they set about their mountain-piling,
 But when another rock would crown their work !"

And we may regard as a parallel passage the sombre reflection,

"A sad thought—a sad fate ! How very full
 Of wormwood 'tis, that just at altar-service,
 The rapt hymn rising with the rolling smoke,
 When glory dawns, and all is at the best—
 The sacred fire may flicker, and grow faint,
 And die, for want of a wood-piler's help !"

Another side-view of the main subject is illustrated in Crabbe's simile of the poor soldier, who, when the battle raged, came off safe and sound from complex perils; "but when it ended, in a quiet spot he fell, the victim of a random shot." It is but a various reading of that trite tale of some gallant ship that has circled the globe in safety, and then, like the *Reliance* and *Conqueror*, when within sight of the white cliffs of Albion, full of joyful hearts, suddenly, in the dark and stormy night, is dashed to atoms.*

It was after seeing sixty-seven persons drowned within a few yards of the beach at Great Yarmouth, that Captain Manby devised his well-known means of assistance by throwing a line over the vessel. In more than one of his elegiac pieces Wordsworth bewails the tragedy of his brother's loss in ken of shore; as in the stanza,

"Ill-fated vessel !—ghastly shock !
—At length delivered from the rock,
The deep she hath regan'd ;
And through the stormy night they steer ;
Labouring for life, we hope and fear,
To reach a safer shore—how near,
Yet not to be attain'd !"

Familiar, again, to readers of contemporary verse may be Lord Houghton's Tragedy of the Lac de Gaube—ending

"Long seem'd the low and lonely wail
Athwart the tide to fade ;
Alas ! that there were some to hear,
But never one to aid."

Domestic tragedy of this kind is represented by such deaths as that of the eldest son of Mr. Walter, in the winter of 1870,—who, after having travelled round the world in safety, perished,

* A sketcher of life on the Suffolk coast, Crabbe's own neighbourhood, has vividly described how sometimes, on the wild winter nights, the pilots and fishermen throng the beach, the anxious women clustering round them, and powerless to carry aid across the curled and grating surges, as they witness with gloomy eyes the hopeless driving of some dimly-discerned vessel, the gleaming lights of which express the terrors of the hapless wretches on board.

while skating, within sight of his father's house. "O God ! to think man ever comes too near his home." Recurring catastrophes give new force in every age to the pathetic simile Englished by Fairfax from Tasso, of

"a ship that under sail doth pass
The roaring billows and the raging streams,
And drawing nigh the wishèd port, alas !
Breaks on some hidden rock her ribs and beams
Or as a steed rough ways that well hath past,
Before his inn stumbleth and falls at last"

From his old station off Cadiz, Blake returned to England, forced home by dropsy and scurvy, and longingly he pined for home. But he died as he was entering Plymouth Sound (Aug. 17, 1657). Sir Cloudesley Shovel, returning homewards from the siege of Toulon, with nine ships of the line, was wrecked off the Scilly Isles, he is said, however, to have been thrown on shore alive, and to have been murdered by one of the islanders for the sake of a costly ring. A worse fate, even, than

"his, who on a wreck, that drove as winds did blow it,
Silent had left the shatter'd deck, to find a grave below it
Then land was cried—no more resign'd, he glow'd with joy to hear it;
Not worse his fate, his woe, to find the wreck must sink ere near it"

The Marchioness Ossoli (Margaret Fuller), with her husband and child, on board the *Elizabeth*, bound from Leghorn for America, was wrecked off Long Island, and drowned, the body of the child was washed ashore, but the parents had the ocean for their tomb. Lieutenant Mage, of the French navy, perished with all the crew of his frigate, the *Gorgona*, shipwrecked in sight of the harbour of Brest (1869). What seemed to aggravate the distress of the Dungeness collision in 1873 was the apparent nearness of help that came not. the anchorage was full of ships, and every ship had boats; and the loss of three hundred lives by drowning in such a place was said at the time to be as if a man were to die for lack of surgery in Savile Row.

Commenting on the fatality which marked the careers

successively of Lords Dalhousie, Canning, Elgin, and Mayo, as Governors-General of India, Dean Stanley observes, in his Preface to the Letters and Journals of his distinguished brother-in-law, the third of the four names, "These tragical incidents invest the high office to which such precious lives have been sacrificed with a new and solemn interest. There is something especially pathetic when the gallant vessel, as it were, goes down within very sight of the harbour, with all its accumulated treasures." Schiller's Octavio, in the *Wallenstein*stod, counts it his special calamity

"To split upon a rock so near the haven."

As again, in the *Wilhelm Tell*, Baumgarten's piteous plaint is,

"Then must I fall into the tyrant's hands,
And with the port of safety close in sight !
Yonder it lies ! My eyes can measure it,
My very voice can echo to its shores.
There is the boat to carry me across,
Yet must I lie here helpless and forlorn."

Verres piqued himself on an exquisite refinement of cruelty in his crucifixion of Gavius, that the cross was erected on a conspicuous part of the Sicilian shore, so that his poor victim might have the additional misery of perishing within sight, as it were, of his home.

Readers of Mr Froude's history may remember the episode of the unfortunate Yaxlee, after having received his money in Flanders, hurrying back to his mistress, when he was caught in the Channel by a November gale, and was flung up on the coast of Northumberland a mangled body, recognizable only by the despatches found upon his person. Or of such parallel passages as "Here died M'Guire, at the monastery of Omagh, within sight of the home to which he was returning by the pleasant shores of Lough Erne." Those conversant with fiction may care, or may not, to be reminded of the wreck in Galt's *Entail*, within some two hundred yards of where the horrified spectators stood ; or of Mrs. Stowe's black hero venting a futile home-sigh, "as to the mariner shipwrecked almost in port rises the vision of the church spire and loving roofs of his

native village, seen over the top of some tall wave only for one last farewell ;" or, again, of Mrs. Riddell's reflection on the frequency with which it happens that, just when the poor human bark thinks it is sailing into calm waters, after tossing over rough and dangerous seas, it goes down among the breakers within sight of the promised harbour, the heart sinks with all its freight of hope, and expectation, and content.

Prior's shepherd wins cordial assent from his brother of the crook when he asks,

" Say, what can more our tortured souls annoy
Than to behold, admire, and lose our joy ,
Whose fate more hard than those who sadly run,
For the last glimpse of the departing sun ,
Or what severer sentence can be given,
Than, having seen, to be excluded Heaven ? "

§ III

LANDED PROPRIETORSHIP WITHOUT CHARGE OR CARE.

" Like fools that in the imagination set
The goodly objects which abroad they find
Of land and mansions, theirs in thought assign'd.,
And labouring in more pleasures to bestow them,
Than the true gouty landlord, which doth owe them "

A Lover's Complaint

LIKE fools? Nay, rather, no fools they. But there are fools and fools ; and Shakspeare's fools are apt to be wise and witty beyond the general. Apart, however, from his fools professed or professional, fools with him may indicate the simple, not in the mere and sheer sense of blockhead, dullard, or ass.

If a simple swain can be self-made happy by thinking himself a man of property, while gazing on the broad acres and turreted halls of some rich neighbour, the illusion is so harmless that it were cruel to deny it him , and were he to impose on himself a self-denying ordinance in this respect, one might

incline to say, the more fool he. Let him enjoy the fine sight, and welcome, and on his own terms. Philosophy teaches there is nothing good, or bad, but thinking makes it so. Our simple swain thinks himself into a landed proprietor, and for the nonce he becomes one, without charge or care. It may be a fool's paradise, but the paradise is there, as well as the fool.

Emerson promises his idealist that he shall have the whole land for his park and manor, the sea for his bath and navigation, without tax and without envy; that he shall own the woods and rivers, and shall possess that wherein others are only tenants and boarders. "Thou true land-lord! sea-lord! air-lord!" One is reminded of the apostle's assurance, "All things are yours." And that, again, reminds us of Cowper's description of the Christian freedman and his prerogatives:

"He looks abroad into the varied field
Of nature, and though poor perhaps, compared
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
Calls the delightful scenery all his own.
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
And the resplendent rivers. His to enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say, 'My Father made them all!'"

Thus is he said to appropriate nature as his Father's work, and have "a richer use of yours, than you." One of Jeremy Taylor's biographers is eager to point out, in his noblest book, an affecting transcript of his feelings when a dweller in the vale of Towy,—near the Grongar Hill of Dyer, with its panorama of streams, trees, and ruined castles,—the union of pastoral and baronial life composing so lovely a picture. The denizen of Golden Grove had fallen into the hands of "publicans and sequestrators, and they have," he said, "taken all from me; what now?" or, as it would nowadays be written, what then? "They have left me the sun and moon . . . I can walk in my neighbour's pleasant fields, and see the variety of

natural beauties, and delight in all that in which God delights." Comparing European civilization with Oriental habitudes, M. Renan observes, that in our societies, established upon a very rigorous idea of property, the position of the poor is wretched; they have literally no place under the sun there are no flowers, no grass, no shade, except for him who possesses the earth "In the East, these are gifts of God which belong to no one The proprietor has but a slender privilege; nature is the patrimony of all." But, given a touch of idealism, and our poor are not so poor as they seem. It is a penniless wanderer whom fiction truthfully enough pictures, on his travels, rejoicing in every green knoll, and tree, and hedgerow,—every one of them and all testifying that its fresh verdure was meant as much for him as for the highest and mightiest in the land. What though, exclaims Scotland's peasant poet,

"What though, like commoners of au,
We wander out we know not where,
But either house or hal'
Yet nature's charms, the hills and woods,
The sweeping vales, and foaming floods,
Are free alike to all."

Madame de Souza remarks of the poor, that, "ne possédant rien à eux, ils apprirent à faire leur delassement, d'une promenade, leur récompense d'un beau jour, enfin à jouir des biens accordés à tous." We may apply what the author of *Latin Christianity* says of the church, that, if it was the one building of the priest, so was it of the people; it was the single safe and quiet place where the lowest of the low found security, peace, rest, recreation, even diversion, and thus he who had no property, not even in his own person, the serf, the villain, had a kind of right of proprietorship in his parish church, the meanest artisan in his cathedral And so with Nature. Do the green woods, as Joanna Baillie's Edward has it, dance to the wind, and the lakes cast up their sparkling waters to the light, and the sweet hamlets in their bushy dells send winding up to heaven their curling smoke on the soft morning air? "All this do men behold; the poorest man." What though, in Akenside's now unread lines, treating of the *Pleasures of*

Imagination, only few possess patrician treasures, or imperial state,

“Yet Nature’s care, to all her children just,
With richer treasures and an ampler state
Endows, at large, whatever happy man
Will deign to use them. *His* the city’s pomp,
The rural honours *his*.
Beyond the proud possessor’s narrow claim
His tuneful breast enjoys ”

Of which universal possession, Dr. Thomas Brown alleges that it extends to an infinity of objects, which no earthly power can appropriate, and enjoys even objects that have been so appropriated, with a possession more delightful than that which they afford, in many cases, to the listless eyes of their proud but discontented master. So Addison, in a number of the *Spectator*, speaks of the man of imagination as often feeling a greater satisfaction in the prospect of fields and meadows, than another does in the possession; so that indeed he becomes a kind of proprietor in everything he sees. But commend us to Elia’s Captain Jackson in this kind, at that little casement of his upper room which opened upon a superb view as far as the pretty spire of Harrow, over domains and patrimonial acres, not a rood or square yard whereof he could call his own, yet as he showed them on a glowing summer evening, “it was all his, he took it all in, and communicated rich portions of it to his guests. . . . It was going over his grounds, he was lord for the time of showing them, and you the implicit lookers-up to his magnificence.” Consuelo exulted in the highways, as belonging to no master, to close and open them at pleasure; every wanderer is free to rest his head on those banks, heaven does not close before him; to the right, to the left, woods, fields, all have masters; but the road belongs to him to whom nothing else belongs, and the meanest beggar prefers it to asylums which, were they rich as palaces, would be but prisons to him. The philosophic German dwarf, Hans Houserl, when Dalton sighs and says, “I suppose nobody is satisfied in this world,” puts fervid emphasis into his reply, “But they can if they will but look upward; if they will learn to think humbly of themselves,

and on how slight a claim they possess all the blessings of their lot—if they will but bethink them that the sun and the flowers, the ever-rolling sea, and the leafy forest, are all their inheritance—and that for them, as for all, the organ peals through the dim-lighted aisle with promises of eternal happiness” Are we not, exclaims as good a German and an abler philosopher, Are we not already denizens of this wondrous universe, with its galaxies, and eternities, and unspeakable splendours, that we should so worry and scramble for some acres, more or less, of clay property, the largest of which properties, the Sutherland itself, is invisible even from the Moon! “Fools that we are! To dig and bore like ground-worms in these acres of ours, even if we have acres, and far from beholding and enjoying the heavenly lights, not to know of them except by unheeded and unbelieved report!” Emile Augier is admired for his demonstration that the world is much smaller for a rich man than it is for a poor one: my lord the millionaire rushes across wide tracts of varied landscape asleep in the padded corner of a first-class carriage, while the poorer traveller, jogging along out-of-the-way country roads, with his staff in his hand, and his knapsack on his shoulder, drops upon a thousand pleasant nooks, and cries *Eureka!* at each Felix Goldthumb, in *Time works Wonders*, describes with rapture to cynical Professor Truffles, how elated he felt that morning as he heard the lark’s first song, saw the first light of day, and gulped the fresh air of dawn, sweetened from blade and bush; elated, he felt, with happiness, for, “with such a world about us, poor men, despite of all, have rich estates, and nature’s truest title to enjoy them.” “Yes, the luxury of staring,” the Professor supposes, and he adds, “Nevertheless, sir, wax and parchment are pretty things” He is not born and bred to appreciate Louis Moore’s satisfaction in soliloquy “The autumn sun shines as pleasantly here on me as on the fairest and richest This garden is none of mine, but I enjoy its greenness and perfume” as though it were. “No caprice can withdraw these pleasures from me: they are *mine*.” Crabbe’s friend the weaver botanizes joyously, and meanwhile

“fears no bailiff’s wiath, no baron’s blame,
His is untax’d and undisputed game . . .
Thus may the poor the cheap indulgence seize,
While the most wealthy pine and pray for ease ;
Content not always waits upon success,
And more may he enjoy who profits less.”

Nature has furnished an antidote to the inevitable necessity of hard labour and poverty, in the fields and forests, in the very gardens and parks which the rich cannot create without building up a beauteous landscape for the enjoyment of the poor man. As one of Gilbert White’s critics has said, the poorest Selborne peasant, with heart and head awake, had access to the selfsame store. The beauty of what we see is ours for the moment, on what has been called the simple condition of our not coveting the thing which gives to our eyes that beauty. As the measureless sky and the unnumbered stars are equally granted to the gaze of king and of beggar, so the earth too, with all its fenced gardens and embattled walls, all its marks of stern property and churlish ownership, is ours by right of eye. Ours, as a master of broad acres as well as of eloquent writing words it, “Ours to gaze on the fair possessions with such delight as the gaze can give ; grudging to the unseen owner his other, and it may be more troubled, rights, as little as we grudge an astral proprietor his acres of light in Capricorn. Benignant is the law that saith, ‘Thou shalt not covet.’” Great riches superinduce new necessities, as Dr South warns us,—the necessities of pomp, grandeur, and a suitable port in the world. For he who is vastly rich, must live like one who is so, and whosoever does that, “makes himself thereby a great host, and his house a great inn ; where the noise, the trouble, and the charge is sure to be his, but the enjoyment, if there be any, descends upon the persons entertained by him ; nay, and upon the very servants of his family, whose business is only to please their master, and live upon him, while the master’s business is to please all that come about him, and sometimes to fence against them too.” In the first draft of Crabbe’s *Silford Hall* occur these lines, following upon a description of a fair landed estate :—

“Thou think'st the lords of all these glorious things
Are bless'd supremely. So they are—like kings!
Envy them not their lofty state, my boy;
They but possess the things that you enjoy.”

Enjoying his right of way through the Charlecot grounds, in his tour to Stratford-upon-Avon, Washington Irving avowed his delight in these hospitable estates, in which every one has a kind of property—at least as far as the footpath is concerned. “It in some measure reconciles a poor man to his lot, and, what is more, to the better lot of his neighbour, thus to have parks and pleasure-grounds thrown open for his recreation. He breathes the pure air as freely, and lolls as luxuriously under the shade, as the lord of the soil;” not to forget, that if he has not the privilege of calling all that he sees his own, he has not, at the same time, the trouble of paying for it, and keeping it in order. The Caxton essayist surmises that there is, on such holiday occasions of escape into the country, more pure and unalloyed enjoyment of nature when it is wholly dissociated from the sense of property—when we do *not* say to ourselves, “This is my land, these my groves, these my flocks and herds.” For with the sense of property come involuntarily the cares of property. And in treading his own turfs the observer looks round to see what has been neglected or what has been improved in his absence; he casts not a poet's but a farmer's eye on the ewe nestled under the oak tree, “Heavens! has it got the fly?” and the kine that pause from grazing, “Why! have they got the mouth complaint?” Another essay writer on social subjects maintains of property that it very much blunts the higher feelings which the face of natural loveliness awakens. The great proprietor, as he surveys the harmonizing beauties of wood, lake, and lawn, is apt to be tormented by the thought that one point in the horizon does not belong to him, or that he is being cheated at every corner of his domain, or that some neighbouring proprietor has a far finer view to look upon. Then, again, extent of ownership is declared to take away from the pleasure of ownership quite as much as it adds: the nobleman is obliged to work continually by deputy;

and all great undertakings acquire a wooden and machine-like character which excludes the halting and ignorant intervention of an interloper, although he happen to be the owner of the machine "Ce palais," writes La Bruyère, "ces jardins, ces belles eaux vous enchantent, et vous font récrier . . . sur l'extrême bonheur de celui qui les possède." But, in point of fact, the lordly master of all these fine things "n'en a pas joui si agréablement ni si tranquillement que vous," for he is encumbered with debts enough to darken the ravishing prospect, nay, *ses créanciers l'en ont chassé*. Juvenal's averment that the charge of a great estate is a misery, *misera est magni custodia census*, is at one with that of Syrus, to be met with in various forms, *Fortuna magna magna domino est servitus*. The Golden Dustman of Mr. Dickens could not but feel, in his "eminently aristocratic family mansion," that it was much too large for his wants, and bred (family cheese-like) an infinite amount of parasites; and if he resigned himself to his new lot, it was by regarding these drawbacks on his property as a sort of perpetual legacy duty. Like the lady of the Lord of Burleigh, when "a trouble weigh'd upon her, and perplex'd her night and morn, with the burthen of an honour unto which she was not born." The Right Hon W. Windham, writing in 1792 from the worst inn's worst room, professes, or confesses, to have what he loves to call a "feel" of enjoyment, such as he could not be experiencing were he now in his "mansion of Felbrigg, master of a large house, in the midst of an ample property," etc. So Chateaubriand, though with something of the pride that apes humility, records his delight when all his retainers left Monsieur l'Ambassadeur alone in the embassy house in Portland Place, and in charge of the key of the outer door. "If any one knocks, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur will open" It is such a relief to be rid of so many *domestiques*.* The words of

* A dissertator on social ambition, after agreeing that of course some people must keep men-servants, and that a man with a large house in the country cannot avoid a certain amount of state, goes on to say, "He is not to be envied for it. It is a great penalty to be obliged to live always under the inspection of a host of servants. . . . It is marvellous that any

Timon's old steward may have occurred before now to disquieted magnates and ill-at-ease grandees

" My dearest lord—bless'd, to be most accursed,
Rich, only to be wretched,—thy great fortunes
Are made thy chief afflictions "

Sam Lawson, happy outsider, supposes " them gret families hes as much's fifty or a hunderd servants Wal now, I sh'd think a man'd feel kind o' curus,—sort o's ef he was keepin' a hotel, an' boardin' all the lower classes." Mr Surtees deems it one of the main drawbacks upon rank, that noblemen must keep a great staff of people, whom in a general way they cannot employ, and who do nothing but

one who can escape the nuisance of servants, and who can enjoy the pleasure of doing things for himself, should voluntarily cast away his privileges " One may apply Dryden's couplet

" 'Tis the sour sauce to the sweet meat,
The fine you pay for being great "

Samuel Pepys journalizes in 1663 his going to " Chelsey, where we found my Lord [Sandwich] all alone with one joynt of meat at dinner, and mightily extolling the manner of his retirement " And the journalist could heartily enter into his patron's sense of relief, to judge from after-passages in the Diary which refer to the plague of servants *de trop*. As when he congratulates himself on his household, consisting of " Jane Gentleman, Besse, our excellent, good-natured cook-maid, and Susan, a little girl, having neither man nor boy, nor like to have again a good while, living now in most perfect content and quiet, and very frugally also." Some months later we come upon the parallel passage " I must remember that never since I was a housekeeper, I ever lived so quietly without any noise, or one angry word almost, as I have done since my present maids, Besse, Jane, and Susan come, and were together Now I have taken a boy, and am taking a woman, I pray God we may not be worse ! " Does the reader remember what came of Pip's taking a boy in *Great Expectations* ? Pip had got on so fast of late that he had even started a boy in boots—top-boots—in bondage and slavery to whom he thenceforward passed his days " For, after I had made the monster (out of the refuse of my washerwoman's family), and had clothed him with a blue coat, canary waistcoat, white cravat, creamy breeches, and the boots already mentioned, I had to find him a little to do and a great deal to eat ; and with both of these horrible requirements he haunted my existence " It looks almost like David Copperfield's dread of Littimer, in the germ.

squabble and fight with each other who is to do the little there is, the greatest man among servants being he who does the least. Terrasson, the French scholar, having obtained a large fortune by Law's financial system, was induced to form an establishment and set up his carriage; but he was ill-at-ease in his new surroundings; he was, like Martha, though in another way, cumbered with much serving; and when, next year, he lost his fortune, he complacently said that it would be vastly more convenient to him to live on a little. Bishop Tonstall, deprived of his see and its revenues, counted it not the least among his enjoyments of Archbishop Parker's hospitality, "that he had not his former suite of superfluous servants—that long train, that does not warm, but weary, the wearer thereof." Edgar Ravenswood protested, after some experience as a guest of Sir William Ashton's, that he would rather endure the poverty of Wolf's Crag than be pestered with the wealth of Ravenswood Castle. Arthur Pendennis and his wife were as glad to get out of Newcome as out of a prison; they began to talk freely as the lodge gates closed after them. Would they be lords of such a place under the penalty of living in it? They agreed that the little angle of earth called Fair Oaks was dearer to them than that Newcome pile of Tudor masonry. One of those essay-writers on social subjects whose contributions have given so distinctive a character to the *Saturday Review*, is for parodying the satirist's maxim, and declaring the greatest blessing of poverty to be that it enables people to escape from the thralldom of superfluous servants. He is persuaded that if the victims of commercial distress could be got to unbosom themselves, they would unanimously welcome the experiment, to which misfortune had forced them, of dispensing with a number of persons who, under the name of servants, disguised the arrogance, the capriciousness, and the discontent of the most despotic and dissatisfied masters. His is almost the style of the Duke Aranza: "Then for servants, all agree they are the greatest plagues on earth.

"Who, then, that has a taste for happiness,
Would live in a large mansion, only fit

To be a habitation for the winds,—
 Keep gilded ornaments for dust and spiders—
 . And, above all, be pester'd
 With those voracious vermin call'd attendants,—
 When they could live as we do ?”

§ IV

SWEET ROSE, UNTIMELY PLUCKED.

“Sweet rose, fair flower, untimely pluck'd, soon vaded !
 Pluck'd in the blood, and vaded in the spring !
 Bright orient pearl, alack ! too timely shaded !
 Fair creature, kill'd too soon by death's sharp sting !”

The Passionate Pilgrim.

THE foregoing lines give fanciful expression to what, in all ages, has been felt, with endless occasions to feel it, by mourners and by musers of all people, nations, and languages. A recent writer calls it the tender privilege of humanity to be sorry—to be unfeignedly and heartily grieved, when the young, the gifted, the good and true, are cut down all too early, as in our petulance we think, by the sickle of death. Grief is poignant, and perplexed, for those who fall while the sun is yet high in the heavens ; whose own sun has gone down while it is yet, or perhaps hardly yet, midday. But from time to time there arises a protest, as from the writer in question, against the “pretty, but false fancy,” that whom the gods love, die young : “Ὁν οἱ θεοὶ φιλοῦσιν ἀποθνήσκει νέος,—or, as Plautus renders word for word that fragment from Menander, *Quem dū diligunt adolescens moritur*. What though Keats died young ? he was consumptive. Lætitia Landon ? she took an overdose of prussic acid. Shelley ? he was drowned. Chatterton ? he killed himself. Chenier ? they cut his head off. Byron ? he was normally healthy and strong, and “might have lived till eighty save for an incorrigibly profligate life.” Humanly speaking, men and women of genius, it is con-

tended, live long* or die early precisely in accordance with the strength or the weakness of their physical conformation. Logic tells us this, common sense tells us this, but humanity, nevertheless, prompts us to cover our faces when the gifted and the lovable are taken from us young in life. "Oh, sir," exclaims the Wanderer in Wordsworth, "the good die first, and they whose hearts are dry as summer dust, burn to the socket" Juliet's garrulous nurse, recalling the memory of her own little Susan, of an age with Juliet, says, "Well, Susan is with God; she was too good for me." Leonatus Posthumus, invoking the gods, and believing his noble Imogen dead, utters an alack,

"You snatch some hence for little faults, that's love,
To have them fall no more you some permit
To second ills with ills, each elder worse"

Shakspeare's merchant of Venice, resigned to die, is taking a diverse view when he calls himself a tainted wether of the flock, meetest for death: "the weakest kind of fruit drops earliest to the ground, and so let me" The commoner story, as stories go, is that of the chronicler of the conquest of Granada, who points his moral that death, which so often hurries off the prosperous and happy from the midst of untasted pleasures, spares the miserable to drain the last drop of his cup of bitterness,—by the tale of El Zagal, blind and discrowned, dragging out a wretched existence of many years in the city of Velez. Dryden's verses on the early death of Lord Hastings are vigorous, if nothing more,—especially for a poet then himself so young:

"Who, had he lived his life out, his great fame
Had swoll'n 'bove any Greek or Roman name.
But hasty winter, with one blast, hath brought
The hopes of autumn, summer, spring, to nought
Must then old three-legged graybeards with their gout,
Catarrhs, rheums, achès, live three ages out?"

* Schlegel says of Sophocles that it would seem as if the gods, to whom, and to Bacchus in particular, he devoted himself while young, by composing for the festivals, had wished to confer immortality upon him, so long did they delay the hour of his death.

Time's offals, only fit for the hospital,
 Or to hang antiquaries' rooms withal !
 Must drunkards, lechers, spent with sinning, live,
 With such helps as broths, possets, physic give ?
 None live but such as should die ?”

If Glorious John had sobered down his style, he had also caught the conceits of the day when he indited the epitaph on “young Mr Rogers, of Gloucestershire,” whose gifts and graces were so rich in themselves, and richer in promise :

“ More moderate gifts might have prolong'd his date
 Too early fitted for a better state
 But, knowing heaven is home, to shun delay,
 He leap'd o'er age, and took the shortest way ”

Sainte-Beuve's first thought, at *la mort si brusque* of Hippolyte Rigault, was to recall the verse of the poet, “Vive pius, moriere tamen !” Be pure, moral, devoted from earliest years to every sacred duty, to all good and praiseworthy habits, to all the noble exercises which engage and preserve the health of the inner man, and then, “vous êtes frappé dans la force de la jeunesse ; vous l'êtes comme ne l'est pas toujours celui qui s'est livré à tous les excès, qui a usé et abusé de tout ! Ironie du sort ! Néant de la vie !” So lamented Burns for James Earl of Glencairn :

“ O ! why has worth so short a date,
 While villains ripen gray with time ?
 Must thou, the noble, gen'rous, great,
 Fall in bold manhood's hardy prime !”

Swift writes to Pulteney in 1737, “I will venture a wager that if you pick out twenty of the oldest men in England, nineteen of them have been the most worthless fellows in the kingdom.” Byron to Murray, in 1820 : “You speak of Lady's —— illness, she is not of those who die : the amiable only do ; and those whose death would *do good*, live” As characteristic of Byron is this, as of Scott is what follows in a letter to Joanna Baillie : “It is not for us, in this limited state of observation and comprehension, to inquire why the lives most useful to society, and most dear to friendship, seem to be of a shorter date

than those which are useless, or perhaps worse than useless" Hosea Biglow is less reticent and reverent in his way of putting it.

"T'a'n't right to hev the young go fust,
All thiobbin' full o' gifts an' graces,
Leavin' life's paupers dry az dust
To try an' make b'lieve fill their places."

Byron said of Mr. Edward Long, "He was such a good, amiable being as rarely remains long in this world." Wesley forebodingly wrote to one of his young lady correspondents, "I sometimes fear lest you also, as those I tenderly love generally have been, should be snatched away" Many of his most ardent and most amiable disciples, according to Southey, were cut off in the flower of their youth, by consumption—a disease too frequently connected with what is beautiful in form, and intellect, and disposition As Ned Blackmere, in the *Gayworthys*, said, when they talked of Say's illness,—“She'll die; she's one of the real ones, and they go to heaven” To the same effect is Mrs Poyser's comment, in *Adam Bede*: “It seems as if them as aren't wanted here are th' only folks as aren't wanted i' th' other world.” So Gray writes to Mason, touching certain objects of their joint aversion: “I will never believe the B——s and the C——s are dead, though I smell them; that sort of people always live to a good old age. I dare swear they are only gone to Ireland, and we shall soon hear they are bishops.” Waller's *Thyrsis* is clear that

“Whom Heaven sets highest, and seems most to prize,
Is soonest taken from our wondering eyes.”

Often in Southey's letter the reflection occurs, with slight variations, that it is not the weak and the aged who are summoned to go first, nor those willing and desirous to go. In his *Madoc* the maidens weave garlands for the head of the early fallen, and raise the song:

“Oh, happy thou, whom early from the world
The gods require! not by the wasting worm
Of sorrow canker'd.”

It was in memory of his own sweet Isabel that the Caroline Bowles who afterwards became his second wife, wrote the stanzas one of which takes this turn :

"Tis ever thus—'tis ever thus, with all that's best below,
The dearest, noblest, loveliest, are always first to go,
The bird that sings the sweetest, the pine that crowns the rock,
The glory of the garden, the flower of the flock."

Jeffrey in his old age makes a note of exclamation upon the number of people that had died since he was nearly given over, "and in the fulness of time, too,"—so many that seemed entitled to reckon on long years of happy existence : he felt as if he had unjustly usurped a larger share of the common vitality than he had any right to, especially now that he deemed himself so useless and good-for-nothing. The sun that goes down at noon, it has been sung or said, surrounds itself with a thousand lurid clouds and wild reflections of light in darkness ; but it avoids all the *morne* monotony, the insufferable depression, the pitiful pathos and weariness of the life which lingers out to its last moment amid the wreck of all things. But it is possible enough, if not common, to take a weakly sentimental notion of the subject, like Isabella Gilbert in fiction, whose ideal of goodness was always associated with an early death ; who could not conceive a long career of progressive worth and excellence ; who thought of nuns as dying while young and interesting, but never as elderly and useful and happy and happy-making sisters of charity.

Victor Hugo attributes to the early dead we so ill can spare
a je ne sais quelle soif de mourir le matin :

"C'est une volonté du sort, pour nous sévère,
Qu'ils rentrent vite au ciel resté pour eux ouvert ;
Et qu'avant d'avoir mis leur lèvre à notre verre,
Avant d'avoir rien fait et d'avoir rien souffert,"

ils partent radieux. As in the query of the Irish melodist, Why is it thus that the fairest things the soonest fleet and die?—that when most light is on their wings, they're then but spread to fly? *Ils retournent là-haut parler à Dieu des hommes.*

The dying Julian, in his own funeral oration, told the spectators, "I have learnt from religion, that an early death has often been the reward of piety, and I accept as a favour of the gods this mortal stroke." Gibbon, in his notes on the passage, refers to Herodotus as illustrating the doctrine in an agreeable tale, but the historian pointedly adds that Homer's Zeus, lamenting with tears of blood the death of Sarpedon his son, must have had a very imperfect notion of happiness or glory beyond the grave. Towards the close of his great work, Gibbon appends another footnote to a passage about superstition interpreting an untimely death: "Can the death of a good man be esteemed a punishment by those who believe in the immortality of the soul? They betray the instability of their faith. Yet, as a mere philosopher, I cannot agree with the Greeks," that whom the gods love die young. Dr. Holmes is professionally sarcastic about those youths of imperfect constitution, and cachectic or dyspeptic tendencies, who are in training to furnish a biography that shall begin with the statement that, from his infancy, the subject of it showed no inclination for boyish amusements, and so on, until he dies out, for the simple reason that there was not enough of him to live. "Very interesting, no doubt, . . . but having no more to do with good, hearty, sound life than the history of those very little people to be seen in museums preserved in jars of alcohol, like brandy peaches" So delivers himself, like a man of this world, the doctor of medicine. It is a doctor of divinity, his contemporary, and perhaps rival in popularity, who affirms that it is but an inferior order of human beings that makes the living succession to carry on the human race: we must, -he says, look on gravestones to find the names of those who promised—and there an end—to be the best and noblest specimens of the race; for all too often the fairest promise of human excellence is never suffered to come to fruit. "They died in early youth, perhaps in early childhood," to be ever remembered at home as the flower of the flock, and therefore the first to fade. Moore somewhere quotes a sentence from a letter of Lady Lansdowne's,

the feeling of which he takes to be as just as it is melancholy. "I never," she said, "can wish any one I love to live long" Mr. Reade's vagrant Jack-of-all-trades, recalling with a gush of gratitude the kindness shown him long years ago by a good Samaritan in the bush, and whom he would so like to see and to thank once more, pithily adds: "But, dear heart, you may be sure he is not upon the earth now. It is years ago, and a man that had the heart to harbour a stranger and a wanderer, why he would be one of the first to go" Mr. Trollope's Peregrine Orme supposes he's safe to live for the next sixty years: "It's only the happy people and those that are some good in the world that die." The queen tells her princeling in Marlowe's tragedy,

"Ah, boy, this towardness makes thy mother fear
Thou art not mark'd to many days on earth!"

Death in Youth is the title as well as topic of one of Barry Cornwall's dramatic fragments. "He's dead,—he died

"Young; as the great will die; as Summer dies,
By drought and its own fevers burnt to death"

Dona Sol, in *Hernani*, ventures to assure Ruy Gomez that "ce n'est pas une raison pour vivre que d'être jeune. Hélas! je vous le dis, souvent les vieillards sont tardifs, les jeunes vont devant" Byron makes the Greek saw his text for a stanza.

" 'Whom the gods love die young,' was said of yore,
And many deaths do they escape by this,
The death of friends, and that which slays even more—
The death of friendship, love, youth, all that is,
Except mere breath, and since the silent shore
Awaits at last even those whom longest miss
The old archer's shafts, perhaps the early grave
Which men weep over may be meant to save."

Dante said of his Beatrice, in the Vita nuova, that she was not, like other mortals, riven hence by chill, or calenture, or such disease, but for her mighty worth alone was borne away. * Even those who can find scarcely anything else of

Malherbe's to admire, see, and what is better, feel, a beauty in his lines on the sudden death of the Councillor Duperier's daughter :

“ Mais elle estoit du monde où les plus belles choses
Ont le pire destin ;
Et Rose, elle a vécu ce que vivent les roses,
L'espace d'un matin.”

Rose as she was, she had a rose's life, a morning's bloom.

The epilogue to the *Wanderer* may supply our last word on the text of sweet rose, untimely plucked :

“ You were too good to grow up, Ella, you,
And be a woman such as I have known !
And so upon your heart they put a stone,
And left you, dear, among the flowers and dew.”

CHAPTER III.

King Lear.

§ I

AS in *Macbeth* terror reaches its utmost height, in *King Lear*, says Schlegel, the science of compassion is exhausted. we witness a fall from the highest elevation into the deepest abyss of misery, where humanity is stripped of all external and internal advantages, and given up a prey to naked helplessness. When the old king is at length rescued, it is too late. the kind consolations of filial care and attention and of true friendship are now lost upon him, his bodily and mental powers are destroyed beyond all hope of recovery, and "all that now remains to him of life is the capability of loving and suffering beyond measure." In a sonnet Hood pictures him, self-communing, self-pitying :

"A poor old king, with sorrow for my crown,
Throned upon straw, and mantled with the wind—
For pity, my own tears have made me blind
That I might never see my childien's frown ;
And may be madness, like a friend, has thrown
A folded fillet over my dark mind,
So that unkindly speech may sound for kind,—
Albeit I know not.—I am childish grown—
And have not gold to purchase wit withal—
I that have once maintain'd most royal state—
A very bankrupt now that may not call
My child my child—all beggar'd save in tears,
Wherewith I daily weep an old man's fate,
Foolish—and blind—and overcome with years !"

This tragedy, in particular, may remind us of what La Bruyère says of tragedy at large, that it moves the heart

from the opening scenes, and leaves you scarcely free to breathe as it goes along; or, if it afford an interval for drawing a free breath again, it is but for the purpose of plunging you anew into other depths, and stirring you afresh with new distresses. "Il vous conduit à la terreur par la pitié, ou réciproquement à la pitié par le terrible, vous mène par les larmes, par les sanglots, par l'incertitude, par l'espérance, par la crainte, par les surprises, et par l'horreur, jusqu'à la catastrophe." Talfourd tells of Thomas Barnes holding delighted controversy with Lamb, respecting the tragic power of Dante as compared with that of Shakspeare; and how Lamb, who "had taken his own immortal stand on Lear," urged the supremacy of the child-changed father against all the possible Ugolinos of the world. Finely had this fine critic said in one of his essays, that while we read this tragedy (for it cannot be acted), we see not Lear, but we are Lear,—we are in his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of daughters and storms; in the aberrations of his reason, we discover a mighty while irregular power of reasoning, immethodized from the ordinary purposes of life, but exerting its powers, as the wind blows where it listeth, at will upon the corruptions and abuses of mankind.

Hazlitt asserts this to be the best of all Shakspeare's plays, because the one in which he was the most in earnest. "He was here fairly caught in the web of his own imagination." The passion which he had taken as his subject is that which strikes its root deepest into the human heart; of which the bond is the hardest to be unloosed, and the cancelling and tearing to pieces of which gives the greatest revulsion to the frame. What aggravates the sense of sympathy in the reader, as of uncontrollable anguish in the swollen heart of Lear, is the "petrifying indifference, the cold, calculating, obdurate selfishness of his daughters. His keen passions seem whetted on their stony hearts." In Lear old age is itself a character, says Coleridge—its natural imperfections being increased by lifelong habits of receiving a prompt obedience. The whole tragedy is shown to be founded on the strange, yet by no means unnatural, mixture of selfish-

ness, sensibility, and habit of feeling derived from, and fostered by, the particular rank and usages of the individual, the intense desire of being intensely beloved,—selfish, and yet characteristic of the selfishness of a loving and kindly nature alone; the “self-supportless leaning for all pleasure on another’s breast;” the craving after sympathy with a prodigal disinterestedness, frustrated by its own ostentation, and the mode and nature of its claims; together with the anxiety, the distrust, the jealousy, which more or less accompany all selfish affections, and are among the surest contradistinctions of mere fondness from true love, and which originate Lear’s eager wish to enjoy his daughter’s violent professions, while the inveterate habits of sovereignty convert the wish into claim and positive right, and an incomppliance with it into crime and treason. “The first impression that is given of Lear’s character,” observes an intelligent American critic, “is that of selfishness, arising from the habitual exercise of power.” His only law is his own absolute will, now feebly guided by an intellect which time has begun to work on. At the opening of the play the king sits solitary, “a personation of the intense selfishness of irresponsible power.” The instant he finds his vanity frustrated in a pitiful scheme to extort professions of fondness from his daughters, the silence of his darling child becomes rebellion, and the counsel of a faithful and affectionate subject, treason. And yet there is “something which shows that these are the ruins of a noble nature, overgrown, indeed, with all the weeds that rankly luxuriate in the habit of tyranny.” *Les personnages tragiques*, Racine argues, ought to be neither extremely good—because the punishment of a worthy man would excite rather indignation than pity in the spectators; nor excessively wicked—because a wicked wretch gets no pity at all. “Il faut donc qu’ils aient une bonté médiocre, c’est-à-dire une vertu capable de faiblesse, et qu’ils tombent dans le malheur par quelque faute qui les fasse plaindre sans les faire détester.” Lear may be said to satisfy these requirements. Dr. Bucknill’s recognition of the unusual bodily strength of the aged king, is one of the noteworthy merits of his *Psychology of Shakespeare*,—rude

physical force being, in fact, as another critic insists, a very significant portion of Lear's psychology, for at the age of fourscore and upwards he hunts the wild boar or the red-deer; his appetite is keen, as appears by his impatience for dinner; and his powers of endurance are equal to those of the youngest of his train of knights. "He has probably never known for a day the depressing touch of sickness" And thus, confident in his strength, he is unluckily as confident in his wisdom, and mistakes bodily for intellectual force. In his pride of strength and station Lear is possessed with the notion that though he divest himself of authority, he must retain all men's reverence, and that everybody must love and honour him for his own sake, irrespective of what he had to give and grant. "His mind is really assailed through his body. Though he felt not the fury of the elements, the storm had insensibly weakened him, and his reason begins to totter at the very moment when cold and weariness begin to tell upon him" He does not fully credit his weakness and dependence until he has discovered that he is "not ague-proof." The demolition of the robust, overweening Lear, and the reconstruction of the loving and confiding Lear, are excellently sketched by Dr. Bucknill. The groundwork of his character is, indeed, in one respect unaltered by suffering. His emotions run always into extremes. "As the first Lear has no bounds to his self-reliance, so the second has none to his self-distrust and dependence on others." Well may the greatest actors shrink from attempting to impersonate a character confessedly of overwhelming difficulty, for, selfish, tempestuous, self-willed, passionate, unreasoning for good and for ill, utterly deficient in judgment, unballasted by any sense of duty, Lear is throughout possessed. But his character, as Hazlitt contends, is the only ground on which such a story could be built with the greatest truth and effect: it is Lear's rash haste, his violent impetuosity, his blindness to everything but the dictates of his passions or affections, that produces all his misfortunes, that aggravates his impatience of them, that enforces our pity for him.

As a striking example of the distinction between strong

passion vehemently expressed, and the utterance of it in the language of imagination, the difference between *Titus Andronicus* and *King Lear* has been adduced :* in the one a man is outraged, and his complaints have passion, but no poetry ; in the other, the injured old man appeals to the heavens to avenge his cause, "as they themselves are old,"—he erects, on the basis of his wrong, a majestic morality,—he "ascends, on the ladder of madness, the highest heaven of invention." In the former instance, passion stands alone, in the latter, it is linked to imagination, to morality, and to reason ; it does not "hurry, with selfish instinct, to that mode of expression which shall soonest relieve its paroxysms and its pangs, but accumulates and intensifies" until the sublimer emotions are touched. So with the curses of Timon, to which the same critic ascribes oracular dignity and grandeur ; the dark pages of his passion are laid before us in the light of imagination. Coleridge classes the Timon of Athens next below Lear, and styles it a Lear of the satirical drama, a "Lear of domestic or ordinary life ;" a local eddy of passion on the highroad of society, while all around are the week-day goings-on of wind and weather, a Lear, therefore, without its soul-searching flashes, its ear-cleaving thunder-claps, its meteoric splendours, —without the contagion and the fearful sympathies of nature, the frenzied elements, etc. The "Lear of domestic or ordi-

* So, too, and from another point of view, has been that between Lear and Othello. If the passion of Othello may be said to pour along like a river, tormenting itself in restless eddies, or hurled from its dizzy height, like a sounding cataract ; that of Lear is compared rather to the sea, swelling, chafing, raging, without bound, without hope, without beacon or anchor. Torn from the hold of his affections and fixed purposes, he floats a mighty wreck in the wide world of sorrows "Othello's causes of complaint are more distinct and pointed, and he has a desperate and maddening remedy for them in his revenge." But Lear's injuries are shown to be without provocation, and to admit of no alleviation or atonement. they are strange, bewildering, overwhelming, they wrench asunder and stun the whole frame, leaving the mind impotent of resources, cut off from the common hope of good to itself or ill to others—amazed at its own situation, yet helpless to avert it. *Dans le roi Lear*, says M. St. Marc-Girardin, *la douleur touche au désespoir et la colère à la fureur.*

nary life," suggests at once le Père Goriot of Balzac, who made over his substance to his daughters, "croyant que ses filles resteraient ses filles," but was speedily doomed to be "banni de leur société comme le dernier des misérables." Four marks of exclamation the author affixes to the incredulous cry of his hero, "Elles ont renié leur père!!!!" Le Père Goriot "avait tout donné. Il avait donné, pendant vingt ans, ses entrailles, son amour; il avait donné sa fortune en un jour. Le citron bien pressé, ses filles ont laissé le zeste au coin des rues"*. Not undeserving of notice in another class of French literature is *Le Martyr des Chaumelles*, by M. Goudal, —a rustic picture of an old and paralytic father who is beaten and starved by the children to whom he has surrendered all his substance, and who now deny him shelter and food. It is written in the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, "Give not thy son and wife, thy brother and friend, power over thee while thou livest, and give not thy goods to another, lest it repent thee, and thou intreat for the same again. As long as thou livest and hast breath in thee, give not thyself over to any. For better it is that thy children should seek to thee, than that thou shouldest look to their hands." The same is the

* One of the ablest of living critics finds an instructive contrast in the situation of Goriot and of Lear. If Lear is weak, he is never contemptible, he is the ruin of a gallant old king, is guilty of no degrading compliance, and dies like a man, with his "good biting falchion" still grasped in his feeble hand. To change him into Goriot, observes Mr Leslie Stephen, we must suppose that he had licked the hand which struck him, that he had helped on the adulterous intrigues of Goneril and Regan from sheer weakness, and that all his fury had been directed against Cornwall and Albany for objecting to his daughters' eccentric views of the obligation of the marriage vow. "Paternal affection leading a man to the most trying self-sacrifice is a worthy motive for a great drama or romance; but Balzac is so anxious to intensify the emotion, that he makes even paternal affection morally degrading. Everything must be done to heighten the colouring. Our sympathies are to be excited by making the sacrifice as complete, and the emotion which prompts it as overpowering, as possible, until at last the love of children becomes a monomania." Accordingly, Goriot is said to be not only dragged through the mud of Paris, but to grovel in it with a will.—*Hours in a Library*, cf. pp. 329, 332 seq

drift of the advice given by Berthold in one of Mr. Browning's plays. "I advise," he tells Melchior,

"None of our kingly craft and guild just now
To lay, one moment, down their privilege
With the notion they can any time at pleasure
Retake it—that may turn out hazardous!"

Of frenzied, frantic Lear, a very foolish, fond old man, four-score and upwards, we are somehow reminded by Pope Boniface VIII., when driven from place and power, bowed down with the weight of eighty-six years,—menaced and insulted by the crowd—borne into the public square, weeping like an infant,—until at last, the fear and the fasting he had undergone, the loss of his money, the insolent triumph of his enemies, and the feelings of infinite humiliation, overcame his reason: "His madness was wound up into frenzy, he foamed at the mouth, and gnashed his teeth, and refused all food" Like Racine's Mithridate,

"Je régnais, et je suis ;
Mes ans se sont accrus , mes honneurs sont détruits ,
Et mon front, dépouillé d'un si noble avantage,
Du temps qui l'a flétri laisse voir tout l'outrage."

The reflections of the French moralist Vauvenargues on paternal affection, are suggestive of the character of Lear's wounded love, whatever we may think of the proposition, *per se*, that *l'amour paternel* differs not from *l'amour-propre*. A father, according to Vauvenargues, does not separate the idea of a son from that of himself, unless the son impairs this idea of *propriété* by some practical contradiction of it. But the more a father is exasperated and afflicted by this "contradiction," the better is he alleged to prove the truth of the philosopher's averment.

When a certain honest man at Eisleben complained to Luther of his great misery, in that he had bestowed on his children all his goods, and was now, in his old age, forsaken by them, and trodden under their feet, Doctor Martin quoted Ecclesiasticus to him,—“Give not all out of thy hands while thou livest,” etc., for children keep not promises, and the

quotation was backed by the adage, that whereas one father can maintain ten children, ten children cannot, or at least will not, maintain one father; and the adage was followed by the story of a certain father who, having made his last will, locked it up safe in a chest, and, together with a good strong cudgel, laid a note beside it, thus worded: "The father who gives his goods out of his hands to his children, deserves to have his brains beat out with cudgels" Another story Luther had, of a doting sire who gave up all his goods to his children, on condition they should maintain him, and was starved by them in return. A present-day poet finely says of Saturn that

"He had given away
One half his primal virtue in sheer acts
Of large creative kindness."

With a difference, the Saturnian reign was in this respect revived in King Lear.

§ II

LEAR AND CORDELIA

BLIND, wandering Œdipus, in Sophocles, is seen towards the last, after the softness and humiliation produced at first by his awful affliction have passed away, "grown once more vehement and passionate, from the sense of wrong." His sons, who, "by a word," might have saved him from the expulsion, penury, and wanderings he has undergone, had deserted his cause—had looked with indifferent eyes on his misery—had joined with Creon to expel him from the Theban land. Hence they have been called the Goneril and Regan of the antique Grecian Lear, as Antigone is the Cordelia on whom he leans—a Cordelia he has never thrust from him. "Of Cordelia's heavenly beauty of soul," writes Schlegel, "painted in so few words, I will not venture to speak; she can only be named in the same breath with

Antigone.”* What a Saturday Reviewer calls her “single waywardness” in not gently yielding to her fond father’s extravagant affection, and conciliating him, “as she was bound in duty to do,” is terribly punished. “Cordelia’s solitary fault is heavily avenged, but, as it were, by martyrdom” Whether it be a fault, critics must perhaps agree to differ about One of the late Mr. Richard Trench’s letters ends with this significant monition to a married goddaughter. “On your side recollect that every concession, every degree of filial humility, is honourable and becoming to an affectionate daughter and a young wife. When I think of your dear father’s advanced age, how I grieve there should be a shadow of coldness between him and the beloved of his heart. *You* may put an end to it when you please Believe a mother on this head. Our children would be omnipotent in their influence over us, if they knew the effect of the most trifling proof of their affection.” Criticizing Steele’s paper in the *Spectator* which describes the devoted attentions of a lovely girl in the bloom of her youth to a decrepit father, the author of the *Original* takes occasion to remark that parents who are undoubtedly wrapped up in their children, are apt, if disappointed by them in their views, to become unreasonably unforgiving : they blind themselves to the real nature of their fondness, and then suffer their feelings to be embittered by what they conceive to be the height of ingratitude. Old Tancred, in Dryden’s translation from Boccaccio, tells Sigismonda that he has loved, and yet does love her, more than ever father loved a child before ; and if there is something of Lear in him, so is there of Cordelia in her, who felt all the pangs of sorrow in her breast, and

“ little wanted but a woman’s heart
With cries and tears had testified her smart,

* Saint-Marc Guardin, in his *Cours de Littérature dramatique*, calls Antigone, in the act of guiding her blind father, the most touching personage in the theatre of the ancients ; but he proceeds to affirm of Cordelia, in the act of tending her demented sire, and aiding in the recovery of his lost reason, that she surpasses Antigone in tender pity, if not in virtue.

But inborn worth, that fortune can control,
 New strung, and stiffer bent her softer soul ;
 The heroine assumed the woman's place,
 Confirm'd her mind, and fortified her face
 Why should she beg, or what could she pretend ?”

We are reminded, too, of Cordelia by Corneille's Pauline, where she tells Sévère, “Que tout autre que moi vous flatté et vous abuse, Pauline a l'âme noble, et parle à cœur ouvert.” So are we by the style of the speaker in Mr. Browning's *Colombe's Birthday*

“Because I will not condescend to fictions
 That promise what my soul can ne'er acquit ;
 It does not follow that my guarded phrase
 May not include far more of what you seek,
 Than wide professions of less scrupulous souls”

When Lear says to his daughters, “I gave you all,” the inference is that he requires all in return, with a jealous, restless, exacting affection which defeats its own wishes. He is staggered and shocked by Cordelia's tranquil reply to his query, when addressing her as his joy, although the last, not least, what can she say to draw a third more opulent than her sisters ?

“*Cor.* Nothing, my lord.

Lear. Nothing !

Cor. Nothing.

Lear. Nothing can come of nothing—speak again !

Cor. Unhappy that I am ! I cannot heave
 My heart into my mouth I love your majesty
 According to my bond, nor more, nor less”

This is perfectly natural, say the critics : Cordelia has penetrated the vile characters of her sisters ; and in proportion as her own mind is pure and guileless must she be disgusted with their gross hypocrisy and exaggeration, their empty protestations, their “plaited cunning ;”—and what should Cordelia do in such a case but, as she says herself, “love, and be silent” ? For the very expressions of Lear about drawing a more opulent third by still softer, sweeter, smoother speech-making than even Regan and Goneril could

compass, are enough, as Mrs Jameson contends, to strike dumb for ever a generous, delicate, or shy disposition, such as Cordelia's, by holding out a bribe for professions—a very palpable bribe for very fulsome professions.

In vain King Philip strives to make the Marquis Posa ask some favour, in Schiller's *Don Carlos*,—that “proud and dauntless mind” wants nothing from his sovran “Nothing” is the title of a poem by Rochester, upon which Johnson has commented critically and philologically. And a volume might be written of variations on that theme—changing from *πρὸς ὃν δέν ἐστιν θυμώμενος* of the man, like Lear, *ἐν γῆρα βαρὺς*, in Sophocles, to the iterated “Nothing,—nothing,” of Jeanie Deans in the witness-box, and to the “Nothing isn't much,” of the youngster, answered by the oldster's “It usen't to be anything at all when I was your age,” in Mr Charles Reade's matter-of-fact romance, or, again, to Figaro's “*Ecoutez donc, les gens qui ne veulent rien faire de rien n'avancent rien et ne sont bons à rien. Voilà mon mot*”

Though George the Third might call Shakspeare “stuff,” he could upon occasions quote him, not without point, consciously or otherwise. When he sent a message to his first love, Lady Sarah Lenox, by her friend Lady Susan Strangways, the import of which was that she might be Queen of England an she would, it seems that she would and she would not. At any rate, when next he saw her at court, he took Lady Sarah alone into a recess of one of the large windows, and said, “Has your friend told you of my conversation with her? And what do you think of it? Tell me, for my happiness depend son it!” “Nothing, sir,” was the reply, upon which the young king left her abruptly, exclaiming in a pettish tone, “Nothing comes of nothing.”

With disgust at the ruthless hypocrisy of her sisters, there is, by Coleridge's finding, some little faulty admixture of pride and sullenness in Cordelia's “Nothing;” and her tone is well contrived, accordingly, to lessen the glaring absurdity of Lear's conduct. “Nothing can come of nothing,” he tells

her, "speak again" Later in the tragedy, the Fool asks him, "Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?" and the reply is, "Why, no, boy, nothing can be made out of nothing" One thinks of Simo and Davus in Terence, with their "Nilne? hem!" "Nil prorsus." Atqui expectabam quidem," and *expectabat nonnihil* too. Some people take almost as unkindly Cordelia's "Nothing," as that of Diogenes in John Lilly's *Campaspe*, where the cynic replies to the taunt of Cræsus, that if he will give nothing, nobody will give to him, "I want nothing till the springs dry and the earth perish."

Mrs Jameson takes the whole character of Cordelia to rest upon the two sublimest principles of human action,—the love of truth, and the sense of duty; but these, when they stand alone, (as in the *Antigone*,) are apt to strike us as severe and cold, and therefore has Shakspeare wreathed them round with the dearest attributes of feminine nature, the power of feeling and inspiring affection. The first part of the play is said to show us how she is loved, the second part how she can love. To her father she is the object of a secret preference; the faithful and worthy Kent is ready to brave death or exile in her defence; and afterwards a farther impression of her benign sweetness is conveyed in a simple and beautiful manner, when we are told that "since the lady Cordelia went to France, her father's poor fool had much pined away." We have her sensibility "when patience and sorrow strove which should express her goodliest;" and all her filial tenderness when she commits her prostrate father to the care of the physician, when she hangs over him as he is sleeping, and kisses him as she contemplates the wreck of grief and majesty. To the question, what is it which lends to Cordelia that peculiar and individual truth of character which distinguishes her from every other human being, the author of *Characteristics of Women* replies, that it is a natural reserve, a tardiness of disposition, "which often leaves the history unspoke which it intends to do"—a subdued quietness of deportment and expression—a veiled shyness thrown over all her emotions

—her language and her manner making the outward demonstration invariably fall short of what we know to be the feeling within “Tous les sentiments naturels ont leur pudeur,” was a *vivâ voce* observation of Madame de Stael when disgusted by the sentimental affectation of her imitators; and this *pudeur*, carried to an excess, appeared to Mrs Jameson the peculiar characteristic of Cordelia

It may be a sacred duty on the part of a child, observes Sir Henry Taylor, to give a helpful resistance to a parent, when the parent is the more erring of the two, and “the want of such resistance, especially on the part of daughters, (for they are more prone than sons to misconceive their duties of this kind, or to fail in firmness,) has often betrayed a parent into fatal errors, followed by lifelong remorse.” Ben Jonson complained that in his time ~~it~~ *it* was come to that extreme folly, or rather madness, with some, that whoso flattered them modestly, or sparingly, was thought to malign them One thinks of Cordelia in seeing Romola seating herself beside her father, and placing her hand on his knee—her heart swelling with forgiving pity as she gazes on that blind, aged face,—“too proud to obtrude consolation in words that might seem like a vindication of her own value, yet wishing to comfort him by some sign of her presence;” and again, where we read of Romola, many chapters later, that she could be submissive and gentle, but could not feign tenderness. The heroine of another lady novelist is stamped with a quality said to be by no means commonly found in the young—a single-minded candour and simplicity of soul which led her to accept and use words at their standard dictionary value.

“She looks like radiant truth,
Brought forward by the hand of hoary time,”

says Carlos of Leonora, when “his aged father, see, brings her this way,” in Young’s tragedy of *The Revenge* And a passing allusion may be allowed even to Mr. Carlyle’s picture of the attitude of his Crown-Prince, sincerely reverent and filial, though obliged to appear ineffably so, and on the whole

struggling under such mountains of encumbrance, yet loyally maintaining his equilibrium. The German author of *Erzählung*, *sicut Deus* tells us of his Elizabeth that her whole nature was so true, her heart so simple and righteous, "that King Lear would have taken her for his child Cordelia" Once upon a time, began the old nursery tale of the Royal Ram, there lived a king who had three beautiful daughters, the youngest of whom, Miranda, was the most amiable, and the favourite of her father. Which Miranda reminds us, not of her namesake in the *Tempest*, but of Cordelia So does Beauty, in the companion story of Beauty and the Beast,—this youngest daughter of the ruined merchant being not only fairer than her sisters, but lovable, which they were not. As to looks, however, one of our foremost essayists conjectures Goneril and Regan to have been beautiful demons, each of them a small, fair-haired charmer of the Lady Audley pattern; and, "perhaps Cordelia was a tall, dark-haired girl, with a pair of brown eyes, and a long nose sloping downwards." But there are petty as well as grand *peut-être*s.

There may be discerned a something of Cordelia in Consuelo's bearing before Maria Theresa, as Madame Dudevant has narrated the interview We see Consuelo stand listening respectfully to the empress's exordium. This would have been the time, however, to address the sovereign, as she paused for a reply, or at least a recognition of her goodness, "with a well-turned madrigal on her angelic piety and her sublime virtue." But poor Consuelo never even dreamed of profiting by the occasion. "Refined minds fear to insult a noble character by offering vulgar praise; but monarchs, if they are not the dupes of flattery, are at least so much in the habit of breathing its intoxicating incense, that they demand it as a simple act of submission and etiquette." If this be a rule that admits of proof, let us fain hope there are exceptions enough to prove it.

Sara Coleridge vividly relates her perplexity as a child at the demand made upon her, by her father, of demonstrative affection, and the displeasure he manifested at her not making him the first and foremost object of it. "I sat benumbed ;

for truly nothing does so freeze affection as the breath of jealousy." This was while the young Wordsworths were caressing him. Her father reproached her, and contrasted her coldness with their childish fondlings. But, as she goes on to say, the sense that you have done very wrong, or at least have given great offence, you know not how or why—that you are dunned for some payment of love or feeling which you know not how to produce or to demonstrate on a sudden—chills the heart, and fills it with perplexity and bitterness.

One remembers the picture in Crabbe, of an exacting but ~~enjoyed~~ husband and father :

" He looked around him—' Harriet, dost thou love ?'
 ' I do my duty,' said the timid dove ;
 ' Good heaven, your duty ! prithee, tell me now—
 To love and honour—was not that your vow ?
 Come, my good Harriet, I would gladly seek
 Your inmost thought—why can't the woman speak ?
 Have you not all things ? '—' Sir, do I complain ? '—
 ' No, that's my part, which I perform in vain ,
 I want a simple answer, and direct—
 But you evade , yes ! 'tis as I suspect.
 Come then, my children ! ' Wat, upon your knees
 Vow that you love me.'—' Yes, sir, if you please '—
 ' Again ! by heaven, it mads me ; I require
 Love, and they'll do whatever I desire.' "

§ III.

LEAR AND THE FOOL.

IMPROVERS upon Shakspeare banished the Fool in *Lear* from the stage, and in so doing they rendered it impossible, as one of Shakspeare's ablest editors contends, that the original nature of Lear should be understood. For it is the Fool who interprets to us the old man's sensitive tenderness lying at the bottom of his impatience, from the Fool he can bear to hear truth ; his jealous pride is not alarmed, and in the depths of

his misery, having scarcely anything in the world to love but the Fool, to him Lear clings Banish the Fool? Who sees not, asks Charles Lamb, that the Fool in *Lear* has a kind of correspondency to, and falls in with, the subjects he may seem to interrupt, while the comic stuff in *Venice Preserved*, and the doggrel nonsense of the cook and his poisoning associates in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Rollo*, are pure, irrelevant, impertinent discords,—as bad as the quarrelling dog and cat under the table of the “Lord and the Disciples at Emmaus” of Titian? Schlegel sees in the Fool, next to Kent, Lear's wisest counsellor, as well as most faithful associate “This good-hearted Fool clothes reason with the livery of his motley garb” An apologist for Court Fools, himself no friend of Courts, asks, who shall say how much violence and wrong the Court Fool may not have stayed, when, in the hours of vacancy and mirth, he may have put truth into the guise of folly, and, with the quant courage of an allowed zany, have touched with pity and remorse the bosom of a tyrant? “Even despotism, in its innermost heart, loves truth; and though truth was not to be allowed in its solemn voice and simple garb, it might be jingled with the bells of a merry-andrew,—permitted in the livery of a jester” The Fool in *Lear* is, as Coleridge says, no comic buffoon to make the groundlings laugh,—no forced condescension of Shakspeare's genius to the taste of his audience. Accordingly, the poet prepares for his introduction, which he never does with any of his common clowns and fools, by bringing him into living connexion with the pathos of the play. The character thus serves not only as a diversion to the too great intensity of our pain, but as carrying the pathos, says Hazlitt, to the highest pitch, by showing the pitiable weakness of the old king's conduct, and its irretrievable consequences, in the most familiar point of view. Coleridge declares the Fool to be as wonderful a creation as Caliban;—his wild babblings, and inspired idiocy, articulate and gauge the horrors of the scene. Perhaps it is impossible to act the character at all: where is the actor who can enter into what an anonymous critic calls that “profound conception”?—that strange affection, more or less than human—that deep

and deeply philosophic mixture of the grotesque and the highest tragedy—that wonderful fusion, as it were, of the Greek chorus and Sancho Panza—the brain reeling, and yet the large moral grasp of firm truth Klopstock complained to Wordsworth of the Fool in *Lear*. Wordsworth observed that he seemed to give a terrible wildness to the distress; but still Klopstock complained. The “universal, ideal, and sublime” comedy of which the Fool is the principal exponent, was, in Charles Knight’s phrase, incomprehensible to the Augustan age. Could Klopstock ever have read, so as to ~~mark~~ and learn the meaning of the telling lines in the commencement of the third act, where Kent and a Gentleman are talking of *Lear*, on the heath, and amid the storm,—

“*Kent.* But who is with him?”

Gent None but the fool; who labours to outjest
His heart-struck injuries.”*

That well-timed levity—so Hazlitt styles it—comes in to break the continuity of feeling when it can no longer be borne, and to bring into play again the fibres of the heart just as they are growing rigid from overstrained excitement. “The imagination is glad to take refuge in the half-comic, half-serious comments of the Fool, just as the mind under the extreme anguish of a surgical operation vents itself in sallies of wit.” As mirth itself is too often but melancholy in disguise, so “the jests of the fool in *Lear*,” says Leigh Hunt, “are the sighs of knowledge.”

* There is a flavour of *Lear*’s fool about Cedric’s jester, in *Ivanhoe*, as regards attachment, no less than light-hearted speech, if not light-heartedness itself. “‘But thou, my poor knave,’ said Cedric, turning about, and embracing Wamba, ‘how shall I reward thee?—All forsook me, when the poor fool was faithful!’ A tear stood in the eye of the rough Thane as he spoke—a mark of feeling which even the death of Athelstane had not extracted; but there was something in the half-instinctive attachment of his clown that waked his nature more keenly than even grief itself.”—See *Ivanhoe*, ch. xxxiii

CHAPTER IV.

Lear and Kent.

§ I.

COLERIDGE pronounces Kent to be, perhaps, the nearest to perfect goodness in all Shakspeare's characters, and yet the most individualized. He finds an extraordinary charm in his bluntness, which is only that of a nobleman arising from a contempt of overstrained courtesy, and combined with an easy placability where goodness of heart is apparent. His passionate affection for, and fidelity to, Lear, are well said to act on our feelings in Lear's own favour: "virtue itself seems to be in company with him." The Esteeseean panegyric reminds one of Homer's characterization of Eumæus in the *Odyssey*, as

"A faithful servant, and without a fault."

So, again, Charles Lamb deems Kent, or Caius, as he delights rather to be called, the noblest pattern of virtue which even Shakspeare has conceived—the man who follows his royal master in banishment, that had pronounced *his* banishment, and who, forgetful at once of his wrongs and dignities, taking on himself the disguise of a menial, retains his fidelity to the figure, his loyalty to the carcase, the shadow, the shell and empty husk of Lear—Cordelia's grateful cry is,

"O thou good Kent! how shall I live, and work,
To match thy goodness? My life will be too short,
And every measure fail me."

Edgar's eulogy of him is as "Kent, the banished Kent ;

who in disguise followed his enemy king, and did him service improper for a slave." Lear's last recognition of him, dimly discerned through the gathering mists of death, goes straight to the heart :

"*Lear.* This is a dull sight Are you not Kent?"

Kent. The same ;

Your servant Kent Where is your servant Caius?

Lear. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that ;

He'll strike, and quickly too — He's dead and rotten.

Kent. No, my good lord, I am the very man, —

Lear I'll see that straight.

Kent. That, from your first of difference and decay,
Have follow'd your sad steps "

The noble and true-hearted Kent banished ¹ His offence, honesty ¹ So muses Gloster, in the opening act. Kent is designated by an American professor as "that admirable personification of honour and humour and fidelity and manliness, the perfect gentleman in a barbaric age." At all hazards will the stout earl resist the crazed injustice of a doting king. Speak up for Cordelia he will. To plainness honour's bound, when majesty stoops to folly.

“Be Kent unmannerly

When Lear is mad What would'st thou do, old man?

Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak,

When power to flattery bows? . . .

My life I never held but as a pawn

To wage against thine enemies , nor fear to lose it,

Thy safety being my motive "

Joab does well to be outspoken in remonstrance when David is doting. Kent's right it is to be unmannerly when Lear is mad. "Kill thy physician, Lear," he tells him, when the angered monarch is for drawing his sword on so plain a speaker. Plutarch tells us how much concerned was Æsop the fabulist at the unkind reception Solon met with at the court of Croesus,* and thereupon gave him this bit of advice.

* If Croesus himself lost the favour of Cambyses, it was because he took upon himself on one occasion to admonish the king, as all but a madman, and it all but cost Croesus his life.

"A man should either not converse with kings at all, or say what is agreeable to them" Solon replied, "Nay, but he should either not do it at all, or say what may profit them" William Rufus, in Landor's dramatic fragment, is wroth at Tyrell's counsel, and demands, "Am I to learn what any subject at my hand deserves?" "Happy, who dares to teach it, and who can," is the unabashed reply The abbot Bruno, leader of the old Hildebrandine party, and more papal than the Pope himself, withstood Paschal II to his face (A.D. 1111), telling him he was not his enemy, but a loving son, who dared, however, to arraign the Holy Father for violation of the apostolic canons Dionysius professed to account this the greatest infelicity of absolute power—that among those who call themselves the friends of an arbitrary prince, there is not one who will speak his mind to him freely. Plutarch accounts it a happy thing for Philip, his having a Demades bold enough to tell him that, fortune having placed him in the character of Agamemnon, he chose to play the part of Thersites. Perseus had no patience to be so admonished: with his own hand he is said to have poniarded two of his officers, who had provoked him by an unseasonable freedom of speech So with Alexander and Cleitus—the latter bidding his master not invite freemen to his table, if he could not put up with freedom in their talk, he had better, in that case, pass his life with barbarians and slaves, who would worship his Persian girdle and white robe without scruple. Callisthenes has the credit of standing forth singly before Alexander, and uttering in public many grievances which the best and oldest of the Macedonians durst not reflect upon but in secret It is not in all courts that the proverb holds good, Righteous lips are the delight of kings, and they love him that speaketh right. Some kings resemble Ahab, in hating the son of Imlah, for prophesying not good concerning him, but evil. Arbaces turns on bluff Mardonius, in *A King and no King*, with the monitory menace, after his too plain speaking,—

"How darest thou so often forfeit thy life?"

Thou know'st 'tis in my power to take it.

Mar. Yes, and I know you wo' not; or, if you do, you'll miss it quickly.

Arb. Why?

Mar Who shall tell you of these childish follies when I am dead? . . .
No, cut my head off. then you may talk, and be believed, and grow worse, and have your too self-glorious temper rocked into a dead sleep, and the kingdom with you, till foreign swords be in your throats, and slaughter be everywhere about you, like your flatterers. Do, kill me!"

It is Kent's "Kill thy physician, Lear!" In another of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, the *Philaster*, Dion is equally outspoken with the king. "What, am I not your king?" storms his majesty, "If 'ay,' then am I not to be obey'd?"

"Dion. Yes, if you command things possible and honest

King. . . . Cannot the breath of kings do this?

Dion No, nor smell sweet itself, if once the lungs be but corrupted.

King Is it so? Take heed!

Dion. Sir, take you heed, how you dare the powers that must be just."

Gibbon says of Probus, afterwards emperor, that Aurelian was less indebted to him for the conquest of Egypt, than for the honest courage with which he often checked the cruelty of his master. Of Sallust, the trusty and trusted adherent of Julian, he observes, that his "incorruptible integrity was adorned by the talent of insinuating the harshest truths, without wounding the delicacy of a royal ear." The wrath of a king is as messengers of death, but a wise man will pacify it. Julian's knowledge of his own temper is said to have prompted him to encourage, and even to solicit, the reproof of his friends and ministers; and whenever they ventured to oppose the irregular sallies of his passions, the spectators could perceive the shame, as well as the gratitude, of their monarch. Very different was it with Valentinian. His most favoured ministers soon came to understand that, by a rash attempt to dispute or suspend the execution of his sanguinary commands, they might involve themselves in the guilt and punishment of disobedience. Detailing the vices of the government of Theodoric, and certain dangerous projects which, in the insolence of victory, he entertained, Gibbon says of the latter that they were defeated by the virtue and eloquence of Euphantius and Boethius, who, "in the presence of Theodoric him-

self, successfully pleaded the cause of the people, but if the royal ear was open to the voice of truth, a saint and a philosopher are not always to be found at the ear of kings." The same historian tells with point, in his sixty-second chapter, the story of Theodore Lascaris II taking offence at the declaration of a free and honest opinion, by the Greek logothete, George Acropolita, who smarted for it, and indeed came off, or crawled off, with broken bones. The apostle's query, Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth? is apt to meet with a rough-and-ready affirmative from some monarchs and masters. It takes ~~Octavius~~ Octavius to bear with even a Mæcenas when, "Butcher, break off!" *Surge tandem, carnifex!* is on his lips, or his tablets. It takes a Candaules at his best to bear the brunt of a

" Gyges, his friend, the son of Dascylus,
A man in honour, and of soberest sense
To disapprove the over-garrulous
Ill-counsell'd king, whom he, with deference,
Rebuked not seldom."

Chinese historians dwell didactically on the difference between that emperor, Jin-Tsung, who bore so well the candour of Sze-Ma-Kwang, whom he made public censor accordingly, and palace historiographer, and who always continued in favour with him however freely he spoke out, and the succeeding emperor, Ying-Tsung, who could not stand the censor or the censorship, and made short work of both. Poland's grand-chancellor, Zamoyński, won signal *kudos*, in his old age, by the asperity with which he rebuked his sovereign, the choleric Sigismund, for sacrificing the interests of the state to his own private ends,—and by the defiant voice with which he bade his enraged master withdraw his hand from his sword, and not invite Brutus by playing Cæsar's part too close. Ethelbert in the tragedy confronts Ethwald with the reproach that he has given away that over which he has no right.

" Frown not .
I will assert it, crown'd and royal lord,
Though to your ears full rude the sound may be."

It is all very well for an Edward the Second, as Marlowe depicts him, to invite remonstrance, in the meek strain of "Chide me, sweet Warwick, when I go astray" A scene or two later he is giving ear to the perilous prompting of the younger Spenser, not to "suffer thus your majesty be counter-buff'd of your nobility" He too has a Kent, and his Kent too is banished: "Traitor, be gone! whine thou with Mortimer" Brother though Kent be, he must begone, that flatterers may take his place, and contrast with his style.

Scott's Mary Stuart at Lochleven utters a wistful apostrophe in honour of that stout and loyal Lord Herries who never knew guile or dishonour, who bent his noble knee to her in vain, to warn her of her danger, and was yet the first to draw his good sword in her cause when she suffered for neglecting his counsel. Macaulay's portrait of Portland is that of a man naturally the very opposite of a flatterer, who had acquired a habit of plain speaking to the Prince of Orange which he could not unlearn when the comrade of his youth had become the sovereign of three kingdoms "He was a most trusty, but not a very respectful, subject. There was nothing which he was not ready to do or suffer for William. But in his intercourse with William he was blunt and sometimes surly." When loyal old Crèvecoeur, in *Quentin Durward*, rushes forward and expostulates with his master, "in a voice like a trumpet," the Duke angrily bids him "Out of my road, Crèvecoeur, and let my vengeance pass!—Out of my path!—The wrath of kings is to be dreaded like that of Heaven." "Only when, like that of Heaven, it is *just*," the undaunted counsellor replies. It is the same rash prince, Charles the Bold, the same fiery Duke, that the Earl of Oxford in like manner withstands, in *Anne of Geierstein*, where the sober Englishman's remonstrance is resented. "How mean you by that, Sir Earl? You are unmannerly." "If I be, my lord, I am taught my ill-breeding by circumstances. I can mourn over fallen dignity, but I cannot honour him who dishonours himself," etc. Unmannerly? Be Oxford unmannerly, if Burgundy be mad. "It might have cost thee thy life," Charles tells him, after coming to a sounder mind. "I

have ever thought my life cheap," said Oxford, "when the object was to help my friend." "Thou art indeed a friend," said Charles, "and a fearless one." So again in the *Talisman*, when Richard Cœur-de-Lion was dreaded by his attendants, and even the medical staff feared to assume the necessary authority, one faithful baron alone dared to come between the dragon and his wrath, and quietly, but firmly, maintained a control which no other dared assume over the dangerous invalid, and which Thomas de Multon only exercised, because he esteemed his sovereign's life and honour more than he did the degree of favour which he might lose, to say nothing of the risk which he incurred, in dealing with a patient so impatient, and whose displeasure was so perilous. Later in the story, Sir Kenneth as composedly confronts the wrath of the king, to whose question, what is it to *him*, whether Richard make match with the infidel, or not, the knight unflinchingly replies, "Little to me, indeed,—but were I now stretched on the rack, I would tell thee that what I have said is much to thine own conscience and thine own fame." Ventidius tells Antony, in Dryden, "You may kill me. You have done more already, —called me traitor.

"*Ant* Art thou not one ?

Vent For showing you yourself,
Which none else durst have done . . .

Ant. Why didst thou tempt my anger, by discovery
Of what I could not bear?

Vent. No prince but you
Could merit that sincerity I used,
Nor durst another man have ventured it

Ant. —Go on ; for I can bear it now.

Vent. No more.

Ant. Thou dardest not trust my passion ; but thou may'st
Thou only lovest, the rest have flattered me."

Ah, that was his crime, exclaims South of the one prophet whom Ahab hated, because not prophesying good concerning him, but evil: "The poor man was so good a subject, and so bad a courtier, as to venture to serve and save his prince, whether he would or no." Fearless in the rectitude of his purpose—thus Mr. Froude describes Sir Francis Knowles—

"the noble old man dared to lay the truth before Elizabeth herself [1569] He told her that his sworn duty as a privy councillor 'obliged him to plainness.' 'My calling, my oath, and my conscience do force me to rudeness.'" Even a client of the Delphic oracle is said, on Brouwer's authority, to have once ventured to object, "Mon roi Apollon, je crois que tu es fou !" Dorax not only has been, and is, but to the last will be unmannerly with Don Sebastian, for that wilful monarch's good :

- Seb.* Thy old presumptuous arrogance again,
That bred my first dislike, and then my loathing ,
Once more be warned, and know me for thy king.
- Dor.* Too well I know thee . . . Thou hast stood besieged
By sycophants, and fools, the growth of courts,
Where thy gull'd eyes, in all the gaudy round,
Met nothing but a lie in every face,
And the gross flattery of a gaping crowd,
Envious who first should catch, and first applaud,
The stuff or royal nonsense when I spoke,
My honest, homely words were carp'd and censured,
For want of courtly style."

Be even a gentle Alice Lee unmannerly when a Merry Monarch is mad as well as merry. "Were you seated with all the terrors of your father's Star-chamber around you, you should hear me defend the absent and the innocent," she tells him: "Kings, my liege, may take a lesson from him" Scarcely can Camiola, in Beaumont and Fletcher, be more indignantly outspoken :

- Cam (rising)* With your leave, I must not kneel, sir,
While I reply to this ; but thus rise up
In my defence, and tell you, as a man
(Since, when you are unjust, the deity
Which you may challenge as a king, parts from you),
'Twas never read in holy writ, or moral,
That subjects on their loyalty were obliged
To love their sovereign's vices."

§ II.

TO BE AND TO SEEM

"*Lear* What dost thou profess?

Kent I do profess to be no less than I seem "

King Lear, Act 1, Sc 4

IF Kent must be called upon to profess, that is his profession And Kent is an honest man, not in the sense of honest, honest Iago, who, dishonestly, dare be sworn, if put upon his oath, as Kent is on his profession, that he thinks Michael Cassio honest too. So thinks Othello; but for so thinking aloud, he is caught up by his ancient:

"*Iago* Men should be what they seem;

Or, those that be not, would they might seem none!

Oth Certain, men should be what they seem.

Iago Why, then,

I think that Cassio is an honest man."

Iago's identification of such being with such seeming, is confusion worse confounded Marry, as Hamlet says, "this is mitching malheco; it means mischief." Hamlet's own distinction of the verbs to be and to seem, is worthy of his lineage, at least on the father's side "Seems, madam! nay, it is, I know not seems." *Esse quam videri* is a motto that becomes a prince.

Byron's Angiolina, in *Marino Faliero*, can speak out against those of her sex who prize the name and not the quality of virtue; not having kept it, they seek its seeming, as they would look out for an ornament of which they feel the want, but not because they think it so, they live in others' thoughts, and would seem honest as they must seem fair. It is the poet's cynical counsel to his fellow-men, in the most cynical of his poems,—

"Be hypocritical, be cautious, be

Not what you seem, but always what you see."

Prodesse quam conspici was both the motto and the maxim of

Somers. Be what you seem to be, is the motto of Lord Sondes *Esto quod esse videris*. Horace is ready to supply any noble family with an apt law of life *Tu recte vivis, si curas esse quod audis*. Plutarch tells us that when the lines of Æschylus concerning Amphiarus were repeated on the stage, beginning, "To be, and not to seem, is this man's maxim," the eyes of the people with one consent were fixed on Aristides. Mr Emerson characteristically defines virtue to consist in a perpetual substitution of being for seeming, "and with sublime propriety God is described as saying I AM." George Herbert's metrical answer to the momentous question, Who is the honest man? comprises this clause

"when the day is done,
His goodness sets not, but in dark can run
The sun to others writeth laws,
And is their virtue, Virtue is his Sun"

It is one of Guicciardini's maxims that whoso is not in truth a good citizen cannot long be accounted good, for although men may rather desire to seem good than to be so, yet they must endeavour to be, otherwise in the end they cannot seem. But there is an evil—that of quackery and puffing—which our own age has seen brought to its consummation, and in reference to which Mr Stuart Mill remarks, that success, in so crowded a field, depends not upon what a person is, but upon what he seems: mere marketable qualities become the object instead of substantial ones, and a man's labour and capital are expended less in doing anything, than in persuading other people that he has done it. As with Dr Francia and his workmen, in Mr. Carlyle's graphic narrative,—those workmen who had such a tendency to be imaginary, and who so vexed Francia's righteous soul because he could get no work out of them, only a more or less deceptive similitude of work: masons so-called, builders of houses, did not build, but merely seem to build; their walls would not bear weather, would not stand on their bases in high wind. Buildings not real enough for even what Butler calls

"A world that never sets esteem
On what things are, but what they seem"

Builders that might be hit off in those other lines of his,—

“ But whether that be so, or not,
We’ve done enough to have it thought,
And that’s as good as if w’ had done’t,
And easier pass’d upon account ”

Dryden alleges of one of his heroes in the *Annus Mirabilis* that “ Heroic virtue did his actions guide, And he the substance, not the appearance, chose.” Swift pays homage to Carteret for his maxim

“ That he alone deserved esteem
Who was the man he wish’d to seem ”

Thomson honours the memory of Talbot, because, in hours when “ the plain unguarded soul is seen,” then “ with that truest greatness he appear’d, which thinks not of appearing ”. This reality, says the essayist on the Conduct of Life, is the foundation of friendship, religion, poetry, and art. “ At the top or at the bottom of all illusions, I set the cheat which still leads us to work and live for appearances, in spite of our conviction, in all sane hours, that it is what we really are that avails with friends, with strangers, and with fate or fortune ” The self-styled Wanderer, in the epilogue to his wanderings, comes to this conclusion .

“ If life no more than a mere seeming be,
Away with the imposture ! If it tend
To nothing, and to have lived seemingly
Prove to be vain and futile in the end,
Then let us die, that we may really live,
Or cease to feign to live ”

Toujours occupée d'être et si peu de paraître,—that is Sainte-Beuve’s characterization of Madame Guizot (Pauline de Meulan). Goldsmith might have accorded her a privilege of exemption from the far-and-wide-reaching satire of his epilogue :

“ Thus ’tis with all , their chief and constant care
Is to seem everything but—what they are.”

So the nameless shadow in one of Scott's Old Play fragments, whose doctrine is that all live by seeming. the beggar begs with it, and the gay courtier gains land and title, rank and rule, by seeming; the clergy scorn it not, and the bold soldier finds it of service. "All admit it,

"All practise it, and he who is content
With showing what he is, shall have small credit
In church, or camp, or state—So wags the world"

Mr de Quincey once took grave exception to the British policy of avoiding external demonstrations of pomp and national pretensions, in opposition to that of France on corresponding occasions; his argument being, that however much the principle of *esse quam videri*, and the carelessness about names when the thing is not affected, must in general command praise and respect, yet, considering how often the reputation of power becomes, for international purposes, nothing less than power itself, and that words, in many relations of human life, are emphatically things, and sometimes are so to the exclusion of the most absolute things themselves, men of all qualities being often governed by names, the policy of France in this respect "seems the wiser, viz, *se faire valoir*, even at the price of ostentation" Lord Chesterfield instructs his son that if, in any case whatsoever, "affectation and ostentation" are pardonable, it is in the case of morality. He does not appear to have called to mind, or to have much cared for, Boileau's significant and summary line, *Pour paraître honnête homme, en un mot, il faut l'être*. Machiavelli's authority might be cited for the Chesterfieldian teaching, the great Florentine having ruled that a prince ought so to talk and demean himself as to "appear all piety, all faith, all integrity, all humanity, all religion. And nothing is more necessary than to seem to have this last-mentioned quality . . . Every one sees what you seem, few perceive what you are" But as Madame Sévigné cautions her daughter, with an admonitory *Ah, ma chère enfant!* the shadow is seldom taken for the substance, for long together: "il faut être, si l'on veut paraître." And Beethoven italicized, or at least underscored, the selfsame

apophthegm, in one of his letters to Bettina "He who wishes to appear something, must in reality be something." Fæneste is the name expressively given to Agrippa d'Aubigné's Gascon hero*—that forerunner of the Marquis de Mascarille, who aspires only to seem, not to be—the Greek verb *φαίνεσθαι* being as obviously the origin of his name, as *ἔναι* is that of the opposed character of Énay, a man of solid and practical worth. Fæneste is the accepted type in France of a race that since his day has increased and multiplied; to whom *to be* is a matter of no consequence, *to seem* is all in all. To the questions put to him by Énay, why he yields to this or that custom, to this or that constraint, Fæneste has one unfailing and invariable answer. It is for appearance' sake. *C'est pour paraître*. D'Aubigné himself would fain be of the Coligny type, as defined by Michelet in his *Guerres de Religion*: a man of deeds, not of words: *agir, et non paraître*—that is what the historian discerns throughout Coligny's life. If we sought for a contrast in character from a contemporary group, the same volume (the ninth) of Michelet's History would offer a salient one, some eight chapters later, where it is written of the queen-mother, Catherine de' Médici, "*paraître, pour elle, était plus qu'être*." An unseemly opposite of Jeremy Taylor's Countess of Carbery, who "had not very much of the forms and outsides of godliness, but was hugely careful for the power of it, for the moral, essential, and useful parts, such as would make her be, not seem to be, religious." The golden-tongued divine of Golden Grove had had riper and better experience of womankind than the Kenelm Chillingly of fiction who demurs to the phrase "real women," and protests that he never met one who was not a sham—a sham from the moment she is told to be pretty-behaved, conceal her sentiments, and look fibs when she does not speak them; and who when blamed for "speaking bitterly of the sex," retorts, "I don't speak bitterly of the sex. Examine any woman on her oath, and she'll own she is a sham, always had been, and always will be, and is proud of it." His inter-

* Aventures du baron de Fæneste.

locutor is glad that Kenelm's mother is not by to hear him ; and is sufficiently hopeful to believe he will think differently some day. There are Countesses of Carbery in every age, to teach the Kenelms—whether a Digby, or his descendant a Chillingly—how divine a thing a woman may be, or may be made.

“ The World and you are dear antagonists
One is all show—the other, without seeming,
Tells what it is,”—

so a poet of our day assures his mistress. “ Content with what I am, not what I seem,”—so a poet of a past age reassures himself. Contentment abides with truth, Sir Arthur Helps alleges ; and men will generally suffer for wishing to appear other than what they are ; whether it be richer, or greater, or more learned “ The mask soon becomes an instrument of torture ” Spenser makes it a mark of one of his many gentle and almost perfect knights, that he

“ rather joy'd to be than seemen sich
For both to be and seeme to him was labour lich [like] ”

Churchill's impersonated Virtue “ seems what she is, and scorns to pass for more.” And in another of those long poems of his, the length alone of which would go far to account for their being now shelved and dust-dried, the too prolix and too prosaic poet analyses the sensations of a self-conscious pretender to virtue, or perhaps to all the virtues. “ Dull crowds, to whom the heart's unknown, Praise thee for virtues not thine own ; ” but conscience makes the praises painful ; she stings and strikes home to the heart,

“ And shows thee truly as thou art,
Unknown to those by whom thou'rt prized,
Known to thyself to be despised.”

§ III

A GOOD MAN'S BAD FORTUNE

"A good man's fortune may grow out at heels"

King Lear, Act II, Sc. 2

KENT is in the stocks when he says that. And he settles himself to the stocks as easily as he may. He has watched and travelled hard, and now, in this "shameful lodging," with night closing round him, some of his weary time he hopes to sleep out, the rest he'll whistle. Accepting him as a good heathen, that is not a bad heathen prayer on his lips as he does fall asleep, at the close of the scene,—“Fortune, good night, smile once more; turn thy wheel” For that he is content to wait. The whirligig of time brings round its revenges and its compensations. As King Edward has it, is his hour of trial,—

“Though Fortune's malice overthrow my state,
My mind exceeds the compass of her wheel.”

Fortuna opes auferre, non animum potest,—a sentence of sententious Seneca's fairly paraphrased in Thomson's “I care not, Fortune, what you me deny; of fancy, reason, virtue, nought can me bereave” Fortune takes nothing away but what she has given, quoth Syrus. *Nihil eripit fortuna nisi quod et dedit*. Kit Marlowe's magniloquent Mortimer is an example to show that a bad man's fortune too may grow out at heels; but he apostrophizes the fickle goddess as disdainfully as the best:

“Base Fortune, now I see that in thy wheel
There is a point, to which when men aspire,
They tumble headlong down that point I touch'd,
And, seeing there was no place to mount up higher,
Why should I grieve at my declining fall?”

Webster's Delio, in the *Duchess of Malfi*, is eloquent on the same sore theme:

“Though in our miseries Fortune have a part,
Yet in our noble sufferings she hath none
Contempt of pain, that we may call our own”

When Boethius, oppressed with fetters, expected each moment the sentence or (as Gibbon alternates it) the stroke of death, he composed in the tower of Pavia the *Consolation of Philosophy*; the celestial guide, whom he had so long invoked at Rome and Athens, now condescending to illumine his dungeon, and revive his courage. "She taught him to compare his long prosperity and his recent distress, and to conceive new hopes from the inconstancy of Fortune. Reason had informed him of the precarious condition of her [Fortune's] gifts; experience had satisfied him of their real value; he had enjoyed them without guilt; he might resign them without a sigh, and calmly disdain the impotent malice of his enemies, who had left him happiness, since they had left him virtue" *Fortuna transmutat incertos honores*; be it so; a Horace can go on to say, *Laudo manentem*, and the remaining words of that memorable act and deed of resignation which Mr Theodore Martin has put into closely-worded and well-graced English:

"Fortune, who with malicious glee
Her merciless vocation plies,
Benignly smiling now on me,
Now on another, bids him rise,
And in mere wantonness of whim
Her favours shifts from me to him

"I laud her whilst by me she holds,
But if she spread her pinions swift
I wrap me in my virtue's fold,
And, yielding back her every gift,
Take refuge in the life so free
Of bare but honest poverty."

There figures among Sir Thomas Overbury's *Characters* the noble presence of one who is said to have this hand over Fortune, that her injuries, how violent or sudden soever, do not daunt him; if his doom be to fall, "his descent is brest to brest with vertue, and even then, like the sunne neere his set, hee shewes unto the world his clearest countenance"* The elder Humboldt, in one of his letters, reckoned

* Compare Overbury's better-known picture of "a faire and happy Milk-mayd," in so far as "when winter evenings fall early, sitting at her

it among Nature's best gifts that he never feared misfortune, even when it actually stood on his threshold, and, as it sometimes had done, attacked him violently. He looked upon it as an uncheerful but by no means as an evil companion. Still, thinking thus lightly as he did of misfortune, all good fortune he professed to prize inexpressibly. Whereas Hannibal, and Sertorius, and Cæsar, and Gustavus Adolphus, and Frederick of Prussia* never abused good Fortune and never yielded to bad, but gave her frown for frown, and set her at defiance, till she turned and smiled on them, Napoleon has been described, ever changeable, ever restless, ever intractable, captious, and quarrelsome, as grumbling at Fortune for her tiresome fidelity, calling her smile an importunity and an intrusion, and often resolving to kick her out of doors; the playing of which prank made his ill-wishers wish that the next time he played it, she would have the spirit to leave him altogether. Chateaubriand says of his fellow-emigrants in London and of himself, "The defect of our nation, levity, assumed at this period (1793) the complexion of a virtue. We laughed in Fortune's face; the tricky jade was quite out of countenance at thus carrying off from us that which we did not seek to retain." Chateaubriand for his own part would perhaps, in those pinching days of penury, have adopted Burns's style :

"To tremble under Fortune's cummock,
On scarce a bellyfu' o' drummock,
Wi' his proud, independent stomach
Could ill agree"

With Burns the caprices of Fortune were a pet theme, alike in his lyrics and his letters. Many are the verses to the tune of "Tho' fickle Fortune has deceived me, I bear a heart shall support me still;" or again, and better, "Blind Chance, let her

merry wheele she sings a defiance to the giddy wheele of fortune."—*Characters*, p. 119 (edit. 1856)

* Who writes to Podewils from Silesia in 1745 "I prepare myself for every event. Fortune may be kind or be unkind, it shall neither dishearten me nor uplift me."—Carlyle's *History of Frederick the Great*, Book xv, ch. vii.

snapper and stoyte [stumble] on her way, Be't to me, be't frae me, e'en let the jade gae," or once more, "But cheerful still, I am as well as a monarch in a palace, O, Tho' Fortune's frown still hunts me down with all her wonted malice, O" Let the rich philosopher wince, the poor one's withers are unwrung. Epictetus reminds Seneca in the imaginary conversation that where God hath placed a mine, He hath placed the materials of an earthquake, and when wealthy Seneca replies that a true philosopher is beyond the reach of Fortune, the other rejoins, "The false one thinks himself so Fortune cares little about philosophers; but she remembers where she hath set a rich man, and she laughs to see the Destinies at his door" It chanced the song that Enid sang was one of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid sang:

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and lower the proud,
Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm, and cloud,
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown,
With that wild wheel we go not up or down,
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great"

Fallen into the hands, as he expresses it, of "publicans and sequestrators," Jèremy Taylor could still claim for himself a merry countenance, and a cheerful spirit, and a good conscience; he would be very much in love with sorrow and peevishness, were he to "choose to sit down upon his little handful of thorns" The good conscience was Tom Moore's mainstay, when money matters troubled *him*, once upon a time. "What a life it is!" he writes in 1818 "I am not, however, thank Heaven! at all cast down by the prospect. as it is not by my own misdeeds I shall suffer, there will be nothing in it to embitter my conscience, and I shall smile at Fortune still. They cannot take away from me either my self-respect or my talents, and I can live upon them happily *anywhere*," (for exile was imminent) In 1816 we find Washington Irving thanking Heaven too—not for innocence in a charge of defalcation—but for having been brought up in simple and inexpensive habits, which he could resume without

repining or inconvenience. "Though I am willing, therefore, that Fortune should shower her blessings upon me, and think I can enjoy them as well as most men, I shall not make myself unhappy if she chooses to be scanty, and shall take the position allotted me with a cheerful and contented mind" Swift makes this the conclusion of a long preamble to Vanessa, that *un honnête homme* ought to have *cent mille livres de rente*, if you please, but a wise man will be happy with the hundredth part. "Let us not refuse riches when they offer themselves; but let us give them no room in our heads or our hearts. Let us enjoy wealth without suffering it to become necessary to us. And, to finish with one of Seneca's quaint sentences: 'Let us place it so, that Fortune may take it without tearing it from us'" The Dean's great friend, Bolingbroke, in his *Reflections upon Exile*, plumes himself on having never trusted to Fortune, even when she seemed to be at peace with him. the riches, the honours, the reputation, and all the advantages which her treacherous indulgence poured upon him, he claims to have "placed so, that she might snatch them away without giving me any disturbance. I kept a great interval between me and them. She took them, but she could not tear them from me." No man, he maintains, can really suffer by bad fortune, but he who has been deceived by good. "Ill fortune never crushed that man whom good fortune deceived not," is, by the way, the first sentence in the first section of Ben Jonson's *Sylvia; or, Discoveries*. And other parts of the paragraph will be found to agree almost word for word with Bolingbroke's; though the noble lord owned to no borrowing account with rare Ben.

William Pitt closed his memorable speech on the night which decided the fate of the Shelburne ministry, with what Dr. Croly and other admiring critics applaud as an example of classic grace and pathetic power. He said they might take from him the privileges and honours of place, but could not deprive him of the feelings which always result from sincerity. "And with this consolation, the loss of power and the loss of fortune, though things which I affect not to despise, are things which I hope I shall soon be able to forget." Then he quoted

the *Laudo manentem*, as far as to the words *resigno quæ dedit*—the next clause of which sentence is, *Et meâ virtute me involvo*, but as *that* might have seemed self-praise, the orator stopped short at the instant, and cast his eyes on the floor: the scholars in the House were anxious to see how he would extricate himself, and this he did by striking the table to give emphasis to what else from Horace he had yet to quote. *Probamque pauperiem sine dote quæro* The effect is said to have been incomparable, and the House to have been lost in one feeling of admiration.

“ Let chance our kingdoms take which erst she gave,
Yet in our hearts our kingly worth is laid,”

is the style of the Soldan in Tasso, as Fairfax Englished him. When one of Jerrold's doves in a cage impatiently exclaims, Can Fortune be so malignant? the other replies, “ Fortune! till now she has given me hourly gifts of goodness: should I repine if one day she forgot me?” That is worthy of Boileau's averment, in sonorous strain.

“ Mon bonheur a passé mes souhaits
Qu'à son gré désormais la fortune me joue ,
On me verra dormir au branle de sa roue ”

Or, again, of Cæsario's pledge in Beaumont and Fletcher :

“ Tho' lost my fortune, yet I will not lose
My former virtue ; my integrity
Shall not forsake me , but as the wild ivy
Spreads and thrives better in some piteous ruin
Of tower, or defaced temple, than it does
Planted by a new building, so shall I
Make my adversity my instrument
To wind me up into a full content.”

§ IV

THE CANDOUR OF CRAFT

King Lear, Act II, Sc. 2.

CORNWALL is mistaken in his judgment of Kent, as a rogue who affects plain-speaking, but he draws an admirably true and telling picture of the sort of character he, by misapprehension, apprehends Lear's Caius to be,—some fellow

“Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect
A saucy roughness, and constrains the garb,
Quite from his nature He cannot flatter, he '—
An honest mind and plain,—he must speak truth,
An they will take it, so; if not, he's plain
These kind of knaves I know, which in this plainness
Harbour more craft, and more corrupter ends,
Than twenty silly ducking observants,
That stretch their duties nicely.”

Antony, in *Julius Cæsar*, when most designing and dissembling, declares himself before the assembled Romans to be “a plain blunt man,” that can “only speak right on” Iago gains his ends by a studied show of rugged frankness and exceeding honesty. Cassio bids him “good-night, honest Iago!” and Othello is persuaded “this fellow's of exceeding honesty.” *Astuta ingenium vulpes imitata leonem.* Gibbon ascribes to Diocletian “profound dissimulation under the disguise of military frankness.” Shakspeare's Gloster affects to be one that cannot flatter and speak fair, smile in men's faces, smooth, deceive, and coy, duck with French nods and apish courtesy: cannot a plain man live but his simple truth must be abused by silken, sly, insinuating Jacks? Sbrigani can assure Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, in Molière, “que je suis un homme tout à fait sincère—ennemi de la fourberie—et qui n'est pas capable de déguiser ses sentiments.” Swift professed to admire in “the late Earl of Sunderland and the present Lord Somers” the habit they respectively cultivated of talking in so frank a manner that they seemed to discover the bottom of their hearts, by which semblance of candour they easily

unlocked the breasts of others. It was Mazarin's policy to disparage himself as a politician in comparison with Richelieu: the younger Cardinal recognized in the elder a great politician, and therefore vastly superior to *him*, who was but a plain man, without art of any kind, and with an openness of character perfectly French. A noticeable barrister of Lord Lytton's painting, is that Mr. Dyebright who was seemingly candid to a degree that scarcely did justice to his cause, as if he were in an agony lest he should persuade you to lean a hair's-breadth more on his side of the case than justice would allow; apparently all made up of good, honest feeling, a disinterested regard for truth, and a blunt yet tender frankness; so that he was exactly the man to pervert jurors, and to cozen truth with a friendly smile. Sydney Smith, in his celebrated article on Counsel for Prisoners, has a characteristic description of the sort of counsel who is admired for his moderation—who with such a very calm voice, and so many expressions of candour, sets himself to comment so astutely on the evidence, weaving a rope of eloquence the while around the prisoner's neck

Among the Maxims on the popular art of cheating, known by the title of *Tomlinsoniana*, from the patronymic of the emeritus professor and maxim-monger, one is, that the hypocrisy of virtue being a little out of fashion nowadays, it is sometimes better to affect the hypocrisy of vice. The professor would therefore have his pupils appear generously profligate, and to swear jovially they pretend not to be better than the run of their neighbours. "Sincerity is not less a covering than lying, a frieze great-coat wraps you as well as a Spanish cloak." The Paul Marchmont of fiction twists truth and honesty to his own ends, masking his basest treachery under a semblance of candour. Was this man, bearing in his every action, in his every word, the stamp of an easy-going, free-spoken soldier of fortune, likely to have been guilty of any dark and subtle crime? His manner "had none of the studied smoothness of hypocrisy, but seemed rather the plain candour of a thorough man of the world, who had no wish to pretend to any sentiment he did not feel" Mr. Disraeli's Sir Lucius Grafton "was one of those whose candour is deadly.

It was when he least endeavoured to conceal his character that its hideousness least appeared." Mr Trollope's Tom Tozer had a face expressive of acknowledged roguery,—as who should say, "I am a rogue, I know it, all the world knows it," and though a thorough liar in his heart, he was not a liar in that face of his. George Eliot describes her Tito, in *Romola*, as talking with that apparently unaffected admission of being actuated by motives short of the highest, which is often the intensest affectation.* Referring to the Regent Moray's "apparent frankness," Mr Tytler observes that there is, perhaps, no kind of man more dangerous in public life than he who conceals matured purposes under a negligent and careless exterior, and about the Regent's manner there was a bluntness, openness, and honesty which disarmed suspicion. Another historian remarks of our Edward the Fourth that he eminently possessed that "hypocrisy of frankness," than which no gift is rarer or more successful in the intrigues of life. Dissimulation may often be humble, often polished, often grave, sleek, smooth, decorous; but it is seldom gay and jovial, a hearty laughter, a merry boon-companion. This, however, it was in Edward, and, thanks to his high spirits and good humour, the "joyous hypocrisy" cost him no effort. The Emperor Charles the Fifth, again, of quite a different temperament, was also noted for the cleverness of his assumption of frankness and sincerity, let the duplicity proved against him be what it might. The sixth of his name was notoriously the tool of that Count Altheim who gained his influence by hiding his craft under the show of a winsome candour. Macaulay ascribes the influence secured by Sunderland over James the Second, "above all to his apparent frankness." Kaunitz was noteworthy not less for profound duplicity, than for a semblance of candour and openness by which, says

* Clarendon tells us of Mr. Braythwaite that "he made the king a narration of the whole course of his life, in which he did not endeavour to make himself appear a better man than he had been reported to be; which kind of ingenuity, as men call it"—or as they would now perhaps call it, ingenuousness—"is a wonderful approach towards being believed."—*Life of Clarendon*, sub anno 1667.

Archdeacon Coxe, he "acquired the confidence of those with whom he treated, even while deceiving or opposing them" A companion picture is that of Seckendorf as Herr Pollnitz paints him, one who affected German downrightness, to which he was absolutely a stranger; just as, under a deceitful show of piety, he adopted and put into practice all the principles of Macchiavelli. *He* candid and open? *He* genial and sincere? His critic would no more hear it of him than Churchill would of those other critics who bawl

"In praise of candour with a heart of gall"

CHAPTER V.

Lear, Goneril, and Regan.

§ I

LEAR, SLEEPING OR WAKING?

King Lear, Act 1., Sc 4

RATED by Goneril, in words and in a tone so exquisitely incompatible with those of abject adulation she[•] affected when flattery would pay, the astounded old king can only exclaim in breathless bewilderment, "Are you our daughter?" It is a query she disdainfully ignores, and, nothing abashed, she resumes the lecturing and the scolding that provoked it. Well, to the doubt whether this obnoxious ingrate can be child of his, there is now superadded a fresh perplexity to the amazed listener. He cannot believe his ears. He cannot believe himself. "Does any here know me?—Why, this is not Lear: does Lear walk thus, speak thus? Where are his eyes? Either his notion weakens, or his discernings are lethargied—Sleeping or waking?—Ha! sure 'tis not so—Who is it that can tell me who I am?—Lear's shadow? I would learn that" It is all a dream to the dazed father, who would fain dream that he is dreaming,* and believe himself in Shadow-land.

Sleeping or waking? that is the question. And the self-same question put by Lear in high tragedy is put in the self-same words by Antipholus of Syracuse in high comedy,—or

* A variety of illustrations of this topic may be compared in a previous volume from the same pen as the present one, *Traits of Character*, pp 302—312.

low comedy, it should, perhaps, be rather called, for what, indeed, is the *Comedy of Errors* but, to all intents and purposes, a five-act farce? Antipholus exclaims, in his perplexity at his Ephesian surroundings and liabilities and affinities,

"Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell?
Sleeping or waking? mad, or well-advised?"

Dromio is equally at a loss: "Do you know me, sir?" he piteously demands of his master; "am I Dromio? am I your man? am I myself?" Several scenes later we have his master saying,

"The fellow is distract, and so am I;
And here we wander in illusions
Some blessed power deliver us from hence!"

In *King John*, Salisbury asks Bigot, in the agitation of their conference on the death of young Arthur, "Sir Richard, what think you? have you beheld, or have you read, or heard, or could you think, or do you almost think, although you see, that you do see?" etc. And Faulconbridge exclaims, later in the scene, "I am amazed, methinks, and lose my way among the thorns and dangers of this world." In *King Richard II*, the unhappy monarch in one place professes, "I had forgot myself: Am I not king? Awake, thou sluggard majesty! thou sleepest." The jealous husband in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* is left by Falstaff exclaiming, "Is this a vision? is this a dream? do I sleep? Master Ford, awake; awake, Master Ford!" Sebastian, in *Twelfth Night*, is at his wits' end to account for his treatment by Olivia: "Or I am mad, or else this is a dream." And some two scenes later he is ready to distrust his eyes, and wrangle with his reason, that persuades him to any other belief but that he's mad. Sir Valentine, in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, when distressed with ocular evidence, and oral too, of the perfidy of his friend, breaks out into the bitter utterance, "How like a dream is this I see and hear!" Leonato, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, when staggered by the charges alleged against his innocent child, can only wonder, "Are these things spoken? or do I but dream?" Demetrius, in *A Midsummer-night's*

Dream, is slow to believe himself awake after all the wonders in the wood: "It seems to me that yet we sleep, we dream." In the *Taming of the Shrew*, or rather in the prologue to that mirthful piece, Christopher Sly will *not* be argued out of his identity. "I am Christopher Sly. . . . What, would you make me mad? Am not I Christopher Sly, old Sly's son of Barton-heath? . . . What, I am not bestraught." But anon he begins to doubt, after all.

"Or *do* I dream? or have I dream'd till now?

I do not sleep I see, I hear, I speak

* * * *

Upon my life, I am a lord, indeed;

And not a tinker, nor Christophero Sly"

Not the puzzle-pate in Terence was in confusion worse confounded. *Ita me Du ament, ubi sim nescio!* Then again, turning from Shakspeare to John Lyly, we have in *Endymion* a hero incapable of identifying himself when awaking with grey beard, hollow eyes, withered body, decayed limbs, and all as he believes in one night. "Is this Endymion? Am I that Endymion?"* Of the uncertainty of the personages in the *Amphitryon* respecting their own identity and duplication, A. W. Schlegel observes that it is founded on a sort of comic metaphysics. Sosia's reflections on his two *egos*, which have cudgelled each other, really furnishing materials for thinking to our philosophers of the present day. But as Dr. Reid cautions us in one of his preliminary chapters, every man of a sound mind finds himself under a necessity of believing his own identity and continued existence; the conviction of this is immediate and irresistible; and if he should lose this conviction, it would be a certain proof of insanity, which is not to

* Endymion is the Rip Van Winkle of classical mythology; of which modern personage we are told in Washington Irving's inimitable legend, "The poor fellow was now completely confounded. He doubted whether he was himself or another man. . . . 'I'm not myself—I'm somebody else—I was myself last night, but I fell asleep on the mountain, and everything's changed, and I'm changed, and I can't tell what's my name, or who I am!'"

be remedied by reasoning Piteous is the plight of the transformed victims of Circe, in the *Odyssey* :

“ Still cursed with sense, their minds remain alone,
And their own voice affrights them when they groan ”

The unlucky Gringoire in *Notre Dame*, the thread of whose memory and thoughts is broken, and who is come to doubt everything floating between what he sees and what he feels, asks himself the puzzling question, “ If I am, can this be ? if this is, can I be ? ” Now and then, we read, the ragged poet would fix his eyes on the holes in his doublet, as if to satisfy himself of his identity His reason, tossed to and fro in imaginary space, had only this thread to hold by. So we read, too, of the ill-starred heroine of that romance, when consigned to the dungeon,—wrapt in darkness, buried, entombed, immured,—that from the time she was locked in, she had not waked, nor had she slept in this profound wretchedness, in the gloom of this subterranean cell, she could no more distinguish waking from sleeping, dream from reality, than night from day Like Parisina, when “ each frail fibre of her brain ” sent forth her thoughts all wild and wide,

“ She had forgotten—did she breathe ?
Could this be still the earth beneath ?
All was confused and undefined
To her all-jarl'd and wandering mind.”

On Arthur's heart, in the last of the *Idylls of the King*, there had fallen confusion, till he knew not what he was, nor whence he was, nor whether he was king. “ Behold, I seem but king among the dead.” So in the *Hyperion*, when aged Saturn lifted up his eyes, and saw his kingdom gone, his appeal to the fair kneeling goddess was,

“ Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape
Is Saturn's ; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice
Of Saturn. . . I am gone
Away from my own bosom ; I have left
My strong identity, my real self.”

We might apply a phrase of Balzac's, about one who “ se

lorgnant par un effet d'optique morale, se demandait s'il se ressemblait en ce moment à lui-même" If grave metaphysicians can make *Sosia* their text—when his obstinate self-questionings, as imitated by Molière, are,

" Et puis-je cesser d'être moi ?
Rêvé-je ? Est-ce que je sommeille ?
Ne suis-je pas dans mon bon sens ?"—

so can they the Little Woman of the old ballad, when curtailed of her raiment by a Pedlar whose name was Stout ; which Little Woman, dear to Southey's Doctor, instead of doubting for a while whether she were asleep or awake, that is to say whether she were in a dream because of the strange, and indecorous, and uncomfortable, and unaccountable condition in which she found herself, doubted her own identity, and asked herself whether she were herself, or not As her little dog, on her reaching home, disowned her, she came to the miserable conclusion that she was not the dog's mistress, nor the person who dwelt in that house, and whom she had supposed herself to be ; in fact, not herself, but somebody else, she did not know who

Gulliver, in the Houyhnhnm's house, feared his brain was turned by his sufferings and misfortunes. " I rubbed my eyes often. . . . I pinched my arms and sides to awake myself, hoping I might be in a dream." Like Harpagon thus far : " Mon esprit est troublé, et j'ignore où je suis, qui je suis, et ce que je fais " Or like Sganarelle in his aside, *à part* : " Ouais, serait-ce bien moi qui me tromperais, et serais-je devenu médecin sans m'en être aperçu ? " Or like Peter Pindar initiating one of his odes :

" Am I awake, or dreaming, O ye gods ?
Alas ! in waking's favour lie the odds."

Soulié's Amab, after a night of agitating experiences, was driven to question the reality of all that had befallen him, and asked himself if it were not all a fantastic dream, of things impossible, contrary to reason, and the mere remembrance of which still *ébranlait* his senses. Might it not be the delirium of a fever at its height ? Phineas Finn, at last home again after

his trial for murder, all alone in the room the evening after the verdict, stood up, stretching forth his hands, and putting one first on his breast and then to his brow, feeling himself, as though in doubt of his identity. Could it be that the last week had been real—that everything had not been a dream? Had he in truth been suspected of murder, and tried for his life? "This woful story," to apply Shelley's lines,

"So did I overact in my sick dreams,
That I imagined—no, it cannot be!"

Or those other ones, vented by Mahmud in the *Hellas*: "Do I wake and live? Were there such things? or may the unquiet brain have itself shaped these shadows of its fears?" Edward, in one of the Plays on the Passions, describes himself as one who in a misty dream listens to things wild and fantastical, which no congruity or kindred bear to preconceived impressions. Blanche, in *Le Roi s'amuse*, "égérée et sanglotant," can only exclaim, "Tout ceci comme un rêve est brouillé dans ma tête!" just as the same dramatist's Catarina, in *Angelo*, in the interview with Rodolfo, cries, "Quoi! ce n'est pas un rêve?" though the act closes with her uttered conviction "C'est donc un rêve!" Some of Arthur Clough's hexameters have a suggestive similitude of one that sleeps on the railway, one who, dreaming, hears through his dream the name of his home shouted out, hears, and hears not,—

"Faint, and louder again, and less loud, dying in distance;
Dimly conscious, with something of inward debate and choice,—and
Sense of claim and reality present, anon relapses
Nevertheless, and continues the dream and fancy, while forward
Swiftly, remorseless, the car presses on, he knows not whither."

There are moments which the author of *Septimius* supposed all men feel (at least, he could answer for one) where the real scene and picture of life swims, jars, shakes, seems about to be broken up and dispersed, like the picture in a smooth pond, when we distrust its tranquil mirror by throwing in a stone; and though the scene soon settles itself, and looks as real as before, a haunting doubt keeps close at hand, as long as we live, asking, "Is it stable? Am I sure of it? Am I

certainly not dreaming? See,—it trembles again, ready to dissolve”

Completely stunned by the sudden and terrible change in his affairs, when handed over to a constable on a false charge of theft, Mr Dickens's Kit sat gazing out of the coach window, almost hoping to see some monstrous phenomenon in the streets which might give him reason to believe he was in a dream. But everything was too real and familiar; the same well-remembered objects on every side; a regularity in the very noise and bustle which no dream ever mirrored. Dream-like as the story was, it was true—"Mark!" cries Martin Chuzzlewit, perplexed in the extreme with his American experiences, and summoning the imperturbable Mr Tapley to his aid and enlightenment,—“Mark! touch me, will you Am I awake?” Hepzibah Pyncheon, in the act of flight from the seven-gabled house, is compared to a person in a dream, when, the will always sleeps she began to wonder why she did not wake up, and at what still more intolerable pitch of dizzy trouble her spirit would struggle out of the maze, and make her conscious that nothing of all this had actually happened. Of course it was not real, she mused; no such black, easterly day as this had yet begun to be. she had merely been afflicted—as lonely sleepers often are—with a great deal of unreasoning misery, in a morning dream. “Now—now—I shall certainly awake!” thought Hepzibah. “I can bear it no longer. I must wake up now!” But it came not, the awakening moment—So with the same writer's Arthur Dimmesdale, in the chapter suggestively headed, “The Minister in a Maze,” when he returns to his town charge, conscious of a revolution in the sphere of thought and feeling His own church has so very strange, and yet so familiar, an aspect, that his mind vibrates between two ideas: either that he has seen it only in a dream hitherto, or that he is merely dreaming about it now.

One of Heine's latest poems, *letzte Gedichte*, describes a dream in which Heine in health meets Heine sick, thrashes him for his presumption for claiming to be the real Heine, and awakes covered with bruises.

There is a dream-horror upon which the English Opium-eater dilates as especially frightful: the dreamer finds housed within himself—occupying, as it were, some separate chamber in his brain—holding, perhaps, from that station, a secret and detestable commerce with his own heart—some detestable alien nature “What if it were his own nature repeated,—still, if the duality were distinctly perceptible, even *that*—even this mere numerical double of his own consciousness—might be a curse too mighty to be sustained. But how, if the alien nature contradicts his own, fights with it, perplexes, and confounds it?” How, again, the question recurs, if not one alien nature, but two, but three, but four, but five, are introduced within what once he thought the inviolable sanctuary of himself? A question to be rather shirked than vexed, because all too vexing.

Roughly handled by the country squire’s men, Lord Fop-pington is moved to assure himself that if he don’t awake, this is like to be the most impertinent dream that ever he dreamt in his life. Lewis the Eleventh, taking breath after his narrow escape from very much rougher handling on the part of Charles of Burgundy, “happy and astonished” at finding himself free, and on his road home, “shook himself,” says Michelet, “to see whether it were really he” Like one of Racine’s declaimers, he might have uttered the misgiving, “Je crains presque, je crains qu’un songe ne m’abuse” Or with another of them, “Veillé-je? ou n’est-ce pas un songe?” or with a third, “Qui suis-je? . . . et suis-je Mithridate?” Or with yet one other,

“De quel étonnement, oh ciel! suis-je frappé?
Est-ce un songe? et mes yeux ne m’ont-ils point trompé?”

Ben Jonson’s Cæsar mouths it in the same vein:

“Have we our senses? do we hear and see?
Or are these but imaginary objects
Drawn by our phantasy?”

And his Lovel, in *The New Inn*, finds all’s well that ends well, in the answer to his query,

“Is this a dream now, after my first sleep,
Or are these phant'sies made in the Light Heart,
And sold in the New Inn?”

§ II.

ALBANY AND GONERIL LET WELL ALONE

“*Albany* Striving to better, oft we mar what's well”
King Lear, Act 1, Sc 4

GONERIL'S masculine hardness and obduracy are ill-mated with what she calls the “milky gentleness” of Albany. She tells him he is much more liable to reproach for want of wisdom, than to be “praised for harmful mildness.” And the mildness of the man comes out in his at once conceding, ironically or otherwise, the possibility of his sharp-spoken wife being sharper-sighted than himself, and falling back on a practical adage, that it may be best to let well alone. “How far your eyes may reach, I cannot tell; Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.” And when she impatiently breaks in upon his sententiousness with an incipient “Nay, then—,” he has discretion enough and decision enough to shirk further discussion, and is content to bide by results. time will tell which of them is right: “Well, well, the event.” For his part, he loves moderation. He counts it a pity to see a good thing marred, on the mere chance of being made better. It is well if it *is* well; therefore let well alone.

In one of the Sonnets the query is started by Shakspeare,—

“Were it not sinful, then, striving to mend,
To mar the subject that before was well?”

When workmen strive to do better than well, says Pembroke in *King John*, they “do confound their skill in covetousness.” *Nil cito mutabis donec meliora parabis*, jingles the rhyming adage. * Hacket relates of a conference held by James the First with Archbishop Williams, that the king, when hard pressed to promote Laud, gave his reasons why he intended

to "keep Laud back from all place of rule and authority, because I find he hath a restless spirit, and cannot see when matters are well, but loves to toss and change, and to bring things to a pitch of reformation floating in his own brain, which endangers the steadfastness of that which is in a good pass" Examine the records of history, Adam Smith bids us; recall what has happened within the circle of our own experience, consider with attention what has been the conduct of almost all the greatly unfortunate, either in private or public life, whom we may have either read of, or heard of, or remember, and we shall find that the misfortunes of by far the greater part of them have arisen from their not knowing when they were well, when it was proper for them to sit still and be contented. Instructive for all time, and for all sorts and estates of men, is the inscription on the tombstone of the man who had endeavoured to mend a tolerable constitution by taking physic "I was well, I wished to be better, and here I am!" The Caxtonian philosopher tells us in one of his ripest dissertations "For my part, the older I grow, the more convinced I am of the truth of one maxim—whether for public life or for private—'Leave well alone.'" Lord Melbourne's "Can't you let it alone?" was not more characteristic and consistent than Mr Pelham's staunch adherence to the maxim he made the rule of his political practice. Consistent, however, that prime minister was not, in so far as he had to reproach himself on his deathbed for neglecting the maxim in private personal application; for, whereas he uniformly opposed every attempt to disturb an evil which lies quiet, "I die," he told his doctor, "for having acted in contradiction to my own rule—taking unnecessary medicine for a stone which lay so still, that it might perhaps never have done me serious injury." *Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien.*

"Amen to thet ! Build sure in the beginnin',
An then don't never tech the underpinnin';
Th' older a Guv'ment is, the better't suits;
New ones hunt folk's corns out like new boots
Change jest for change is like those big hotels
Where they shift plates, an' let ye live on smells."

If a man pulls his house down at great inconvenience to himself because its walls are cracking, its roof lets in the rain, and its rooms are ill-arranged ; and builds up in its stead at great expense—the illustration is by a True Reformer—a commodious, weather-tight, solid mansion ; he is not to be talked over by some glib-tongued architect who comes to him, and says, “Why don’t you pull your house down and build another—it is only what you did a few years ago.” The British householder knows better, or ought to know. Dryden is not too conservative or old-fashioned, *mutatis mutandis*, for quotation on such a topic.

“To change foundations, cast the frame anew,
Is work for rebels, who base ends pursue ;
At once divine and human laws control,
And mend the parts by ruin of the whole,
The tampering world is subject to this curse,
To physic their disease into a worse.”

But one had need to be guarded against onesidedness in any and in every aspect of life and character. The Let-well-aloners are contemptuously consigned by Sydney Smith, in his classification of mankind, to first-cousinhood with the Noodles—people who have begun to think and to act, but are timid, and afraid to try their wings, and tremble at the sound of their own footsteps as they advance, and think it safer to stand still. It tells, and is meant to tell, against the French commander at Inkerman, that when the Russians were retreating in confusion, and Lord Raglan earnestly pressed General Canrobert to bring up the right wing of his army, and attack them as they were crossing the bridge, that commanding officer declined, saying, it was “best to let well alone,”—nearly the identical form of expression used, it has been remarked, by Sir Harry Burrard when refusing to follow up the earliest of Wellington’s peninsular successes. The French general, however, is known to have at least seen and frankly admitted his error when too late.

Noted was Sir Robert Walpole, as a man very quiet in his courage and strength, “given to digest his victuals,” as Mr. Carlyle describes him, “and be peaceable with every-

body,"—noted for one rule, that stood in place of many to keep out of every business which it was possible for human wisdom to stave aside. "What good will you get out of going into that? Leave well alone. And even leave ill alone. You will not want for work. Mind your pudding, and say little." At home and abroad, that, it seems, was the safe secret. Sturdy Englishman though he was, and unread though he was in *belles lettres*, home or foreign, but foreign more particularly, Sir Robert was the man to appreciate the moral of one of Voltaire's *contes moraux*, which is so pointed as to adorn the tale—

"Ma chère enfant, rien n'est plus périlleux
Que de quitter le bien pour être mieux."

§ III.

HYSTERICA PASSIO

King Lear, Act II, Sc 4.

THE swelling of his heart is too much for Lear, as filial ingratitude becomes more and more flagrant to him; but he struggles to subdue at least the extremity of emotion. He will not be submerged by sorrow, if he can help it, but the rising of the tide is beyond his control.

"Hysterica passio! down, thou climbing sorrow,
Thy element's below!"

Later on we overhear the interjectional wail of the King, and wild word-catching of the Fool.

"*Lear*. O me, my heart, my rising heart!—but, down.

Fool Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels, when she put them in the paste alive, she rapped 'em o' the coxcombs with a stick, and cried, Down, wantons, down!"

Cordelia is her father's daughter when the cruel news overtakes her of his outcast career. "She heaved the name of father pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart." Says

Leontes, "I have *tremor cordis* on me:—my heart dances ; but not for joy,—not joy" Byron gives a ludicrous turn to this class of sensations, when describing what

"was but a convulsion, which though short,
Can never be described , we all have heard,
And some of us have felt, thus 'all amoit'."

Relating a certain passage in his autobiography, Leigh Hunt makes the confession, "I was obliged to gulp down a sensation in the throat, such as men cannot very well afford to confess 'in these degenerate days,' though Achilles and old Lear made nothing of owning it." His Colonna, in *A Legend of Florence*, speaks of "swallowing the lumpish sorrow in one's throat." Arthur's Queen, in the *Idylls*, as she sat with lips severely placid, "felt the knot climb in her throat." Valtomer, in *Basil*, one of the Plays on the Passions, "felt a sudden tightness grasp his throat as it would strangle him"—such as he felt, he knew it well, some twenty years before, when his good father shed his blessing on him. Edward, in another triagedy of the series, embracing Ethwald, exclaims,

"Fain would I speak the thoughts I bear to thee,
But they do choke and flutter in my throat,
And make me like a child."

There is an entry in Scott's Diary, when days were the darkest with him, and death was in the house, which runs thus. "I do not know what other folks feel, but with me the hysterical passion that impels tears is a terrible violence—a sort of throttling sensation" Two years later we come upon this other entry of Sir Walter's: "I was sadly worried by the black dog this morning, that vile palpitation of the heart—that *tremor cordis*—that hysterical passion which forces unbidden sighs and tears." Cooper's old Pathfinder, when deeply moved, would try to laugh in his usual noiseless way, but the effort produced a strange and discordant sound, and it "appeared nearly to choke him." "The sensation of choking became so strong, that he fairly gripped his throat, like one who sought physical relief, for physical suffering," and the convulsive manner in which

his fingers worked was a distress to see. This bit of fiction reminds us of a little biographical matter of fact,—that General Jackson, according to Mr. Parton, could never speak in the Senate, "on account of the rashness of his feelings I have seen him attempt it repeatedly, and as often choke with rage." As to little bits of fiction, they might be multiplied indefinitely. There is Mr Trollope's Herbert Fitzgerald, when "a gurgling struggle fell upon his throat and hindered him from speaking" on a painful topic to Lady Desmond. There is Helen Rolleston on the desert island, when "something rose in her throat, she tried to laugh instead of crying, and so she did both, and went into a violent fit of hysterics that showed how thoroughly her nature had been stirred to its depths." There is the escaped convict in *Great Expectations*, when "something clicked in his throat, as if he had works in him like a clock, and was going to strike, and he smeared his ragged rough sleeve over his eyes." And there is Squire Hazeldean, drawing his hand across his eyes, not trusting himself to speak, and dashing away the-bitter tear that sprang from a swelling indignant heart: "Then he uttered an inarticulate sound, and, finding his voice gone, moved away to the door, and left the house." Following him, we see his trembling, nervous fingers fumble at the button of his coat, trying to tighten the garment across his chest, as if to confirm a resolution that still sought to struggle out of the revolting heart. To *undo* a button is the more common need. Like Lear again, in that exquisite stroke of pathetic realism, "Pray you, undo this button. Thank you, sir,"—which comes next upon the Never, never, never, never, never! that his Cordelia will come again. Like Paulina's "O, cut my lace, lest my heart, creaking it, break too!" The touch of natural realism, so homely, strikes home at once. Not as a parallel passage, but as an illustration of this pathetic homeliness, might be cited Beatrice's "Reach me that handkerchief!—my brain is hurt, my eyes are full of blood, just wipe them for me—I see but indistinctly," in Shelley's tragedy. In more than one of Joanna Baillie's long-forgotten comedies—for even her tragedies are

almost unread now, very highly as Scott thought of them—a more direct echo of the unbuttoning petition may be seen, as in the *Election*, when Baltimore, overcome by emotion, strives to open his waistcoat, and his collar. “My buttons are tight over my breast; I can’t get this thing from my throat,” or in the *Second Marriage*, where Robert tries to gulp down his agitation with the excuse, “This vile neckcloth takes me so tight round the throat, and a plague to it!”

The “pray you, undo this button,” of Lear, coming where it does and expressing what it does, Mr Lowell calls one of those touches of the pathetically sublime, of which only Shakspeare ever knew the secret. Prosaic versions or variations of it are common in fiction, because common in life. When Veronica, for instance, in the novel which bears her name, has fled from home, and the surmise reaches her father’s ears that she left his house, not meaning to return, “H-how *dare* you?” gasped the vicar, and then suddenly ceased, as though the words were arrested in his throat and were almost choking him,—“Untie his neckcloth!” cried the surgeon. The vicar waved him off, but suffered old Joanna to obey Mr. Plew’s directions.

Parting, in stupefied sorrow, from Diana Vernon and her father, with her words “farewell, for ever!” ringing in his ears, Francis Osbaldiston wiped his eyes mechanically, and almost without being aware that tears were flowing, but the drops fell thicker and thicker. “I felt,” he says, “the tightening of the throat and breast, the *hysterica passio* of poor Lear, and sitting down by the wayside, I shed a flood of the first and most bitter tears which had flowed from my eyes since childhood.”—When the Minister, in *A Daughter of Heth*, objected that the Manse would be very lonely without Coquette, whom, because she was pining and fading away in its dulness, his son was for taking away, to himself, for good and all,—“Look here, father,” said the Whaup, with a great lump rising in his throat, “the Manse would be very lonely if she were to remain as she is much longer. . . . I know how that would end, if it went on—and I don’t mean to let Coquette slip out of our fingers like that—and I—” The Whaup could say no more.

He turned aside, and began to kick the gravel with his feet. He was past talking—the lump was too big in his throat.—Phineas Finn, visited in prison by dear friends, a prisoner on the charge of murder, laughed a forced laugh as he welcomed them, and called this “a pleasant state of things,” but as he laughed he also sobbed, with a “low, irrepressible, convulsive movement in his throat.”

When the curtain fell to frenzied applause on the *Richard Darlington* of Alexandre Dumas, (Dec. 10, 1832,) the author, rushing behind the scenes to greet the actors, met on his way Alfred de Musset, who was “very pale” and interestingly agitated. “What ails you, my dear poet?” was the sensational dramatist’s fishing question. “Nothing, I am only choking,” was the reply. “This was,” adds Dumas, “the very highest praise he could give me, for the play really *is* a choking one.”

At the stroke which prostrates his father, Tom Tulliver, in the *Mill on the Floss*, “felt that pressure of the heart which forbids tears,” and tightened his arm convulsively round Maggie as she sobbed.

Mr Charles Reade writes of his Josephine, in *White Lies*, when she wrestled so long and terribly with nature in the old oak tree, a despairing listener to the colloquy between Camille and her sister Rose, that at last her bosom seemed to fill to choking, then to split wide open and give the struggling soul passage in one gasping sob and heart-stricken cry. Could she have pent this in she must have died. It is Camille’s turn next. At the close of the same chapter, after utterances that recall the couplet of Boileau,

“Mais sa voix s’échappant au travers des sanglots,
Dans sa bouche à la fin fit passage à ces mots,” etc ,

we hear the quiet despairing tones die away, and then “something seemed to snap asunder in the great heart,” and the worn body that heart had held up so long, rolled like a dead log upon the ground, with a tremendous fall.

History records of James V. of Scotland, after the disgraceful rout of his forces at Solway Moss, that, shutting

himself up in his palace at Falkland, he would awake from his dejection and lethargy only to strike his hand upon his heart, and make a convulsive effort, as if to tear from his breast the load of despair which oppressed it.

§ IV.

"WHAT NEED ONE?"

King Lear, Act II, Sc. 4.

LEAR'S train is to be cut down to the lowest terms, by those "unnatural hags," his two elder daughters. He will not bide one instant under Goneril's roof, after her abating him of half his train—"fifty men dismissed." No, rather he abjures all roofs, and will be a comrade with the wolf and owl. To Regan he hies him, secure of worthier treatment there. But thus going further he but fares worse. If Regan is to take him in, she desires him to bring no more than half fifty men; to more than five and twenty she refuses place. "I gave you all!" the old king bitterly exclaims.

"What, must I come to you
With five and twenty, Regan? said you so?"

Reg And speak it again, my lord, no more with me
Lear Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favour'd,
 When others are more wicked; not being the worst,
 Stands in some rank of praise —I'll go with thee; [*To Goneril*.
 The fifty yet doth double five and twenty,
 And thou art twice her love.

Gon Hear me, my lord
 What need you five and twenty, ten, or five,
 To follow in a house where twice so many
 Have a command to tend you?

Reg WHAT NEED ONE?"

And this was she on whose "tender-hefted nature" Lear had relied, and who should never have, as Goneril had, his curse: "'Tis not in thee," he had told her at his coming, "to grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train, to bandy hasty words; to

scant my sizes." It was not in her ? It was in her to say, "What need one ?" and what was in her, anon came out.

With this intensity of effect has Shakspeare improved upon the ballad in Percy's *Reliques*, which tells how

"old king Lear this while with his two daughters staid,
Forgetful of their promised loves, full soon the same decay'd;
And living in queen Ragan's court, the eldest of the twain,
She took from him his chiefest means, and most of all his train."

The aged emperor Andronicus, when the younger of that name, his grandson, assumed the sole administration, was nominally still to enjoy the style and pre-eminence of first emperor, the use of the great palace, and a pension of twenty-four thousand pieces of gold. But it may be read in Gibbon how soon his impotence was exposed to contempt and oblivion, and how soon a reduced allowance of ten thousand pieces was all that he could ask, and more than he could hope. Presently, "it was not without difficulty that the late emperor could procure three or four pieces to satisfy his simple wants" as a monk in a cell. Gibbon, by the way, with all his favour towards Julian, cannot offer to defend that emperor's "haste and inconsiderate severity" in reducing, by a single edict, the palace of Constantinople to an immense desert, and dismissing with ignominy the whole train of slaves and dependants, without provision for old age, or poverty, or faithful service. Such reductions are generally telling against the iron hand that enforces them.

The instance of Andronicus reminds us of Henry the Fourth, of Germany, disbanding his army, in reliance on the pact with his son, that each should retain three hundred knights only, and pass Christmas together at Mentz. In vain the Kaiser's more cautious and faithful followers remonstrated against their master's imprudence. Next day he was conveyed to the strong castle of Bechelheim; and no sooner was he, with a few attendants, within the walls, than the gates were closed, and Henry was a prisoner.

One master-writer of historical romance describes Lewis the Eleventh fuming and fretting at the expenses of his household,

and cutting them down, as it were, from fifties to five-and-twenties, and thence almost to the zero point of "what need one?" "Next year, if God and our Lady grant us life, we shall take our diet-drink out of a pewter-pot" Another describes Cardinal Mazarin economizing the travelling expenses of his guards,—and all but reaching the *reductio ad absurdum* of "what need one?" by dint of using the king's instead. Discussing the prospects of Italy in 1859, and the treatment of the Pope by his imperial protector in France, whose oracular voice then indicated the fate which was to await the Holy Father's remaining Trans-Appennine possessions, and announced that Ancona, as well as Bologna and Ravenna, added nothing to the splendour of Rome, a Saturday Reviewer went on to say, "The Protestant Regan tacitly allowed the Pope to retain his diminished retinue of provinces; but the orthodox Goneril unkindly asks why he needs 'ten or five.'" But it was Regan that put to the question the finishing stroke of "what need one?" Another publicist, about the same time, in treating of the Servian question, took occasion to observe, that if one plausible pretension prejudicial to Turkey was to be admitted in defiance of treaties, it would soon fare with her outlying provinces and frontier fortresses as with Lear's knights: why five, why three, why one?

All sorts of heterogeneous illustrations of the text might be heaped together. Such as the query submitted in the Reign of Terror to the Convention by the Revolutionary Tribunal, impatient of the forms of justice and the delays of evidence: "But why, we ask, have any witnesses at all?" Or such as the story of Gouvion de St. Cyr, in an earlier stage of the Revolution, going to some bureau for a passport, and giving his name, Monsieur de St Cyr To which the clerk replied, "Il n'y a pas de De" "Eh bien! M. Saint Cyr." "Il n'y a pas de Saint," "Diable! M. Cyr, donc" "Il n'y a pas de Sire: nous avons décapité le tyran" A process of elimination with a vengeance. Or take Anthony Wood's odious Colonel, Unton Croke, who was stringent for reducing the number of colleges at Wood's university to three—though, for the matter of that, what *need* one? Or, again, apply the tactics of that

insatiable kinsman to whom Dodwell, the non-juror, made over the bulk of his estate, retaining only for himself a modest quantum to supply his simple needs, but who was for encroaching upon and abating even this residuum, until his benefactor should be in fact dependent upon him for daily bread. Or, again, glance at Wesley and his companions at Oxford, carrying out to the full, by degrees, their ascetic principles; first leaving off the use of flesh and wine, then reducing the amount and the frequency of their meals on rice or biscuit; then trying whether life might not be as well sustained by one unvaried fare, as by diversity of food, and so making bread the one thing needful. For with daily food, one thing is needful, and there is no use in saying, What need one? But,

“O reason not the need our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man’s life is cheap as beast’s.”

John Dashwood and his wife, in Miss Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*, discuss an allowance to his sisters; and the wife suggests that the proposed sum be diminished by one half. five hundred pounds would be a prodigious increase to their fortunes “And, indeed, it strikes me that they can want no addition at all.” “It will certainly be the best way A present of fifty pounds, now and then, will prevent their ever being distressed for money, and will, I think, be amply discharging my promise to my father.” “To be sure it will. Indeed, to say the truth, I am convinced within myself that your father had no idea of giving them any money at all,”—but just sending them presents of game and fish sometimes, and so on: “I’ll lay my life that he meant nothing further; indeed, it would be very strange and unreasonable if he did” This married pair might have paired off with Boileau’s *couple illustre*, who pared down their own establishment so unsparingly; to whom “un vieux valet restait . . . il fallut s’en défaire il fut de la maison chassé comme un corsaire. Voilà nos deux époux sans valets, tout seuls,” etc. Mrs. John Dashwood’s argument gave to her husband’s intentions what-

ever of decision was wanting before; and he finally resolved that it would be absolutely unnecessary, if not highly indecorous, to do more for the widow and children of his father than such kind of neighbourly acts as his model of a wife pointed out

Sir Walter Scott, when he wrote the *Heart of Mid-Lothian*, described the City Guard of his own romantic town as then virtually extinct—the gradual diminution of those civic soldiers reminding him of the abatement of King Lear's hundred knights "The edicts of each succeeding set of magistrates have, like those of Goneril and Regan, diminished this venerable band with the similar question, 'What need we five-and-twenty?—ten?—or five?' And it is now nearly come to, 'What need one?'" The passage would be running in his head, too, when he described Mary Stuart at Lochleven—"the daughter of so many kings" reduced in her personal attendance to just two waiting-women and a boy. The boy she summons to follow to prepare her court, "you, who are all our male attendance,"—and the Lady of Lochleven, folding her arms, and smiling in bitter resentment, repeats the words, "Thy whole male attendance! And well for thee had it been had thy train never been larger!" Schiller, in his tragedy, expatiates on the same theme; as where Kennedy hastens towards the Queen, with words of indignation at the fact that each coming day heaps fresh indignities, new sufferings on her royal head: "the last poor remnant of thy bridal ornaments" has just been seized; "nought now remains of royal state—thou art indeed bereft!" And to Paulet the Queen anon addresses herself—

"I have been parted from my faithful women,
And from my servants,—tell me, where are they?"

Lear's exceeding bitter cry, "I gave you all!" is literally enough adopted and echoed by le Père Goriot of Balzac. "Je n'ai pas, un sou, mon enfant! *J'ai tout donné, tout!*" Later he counsels the one male friend that visits him in his lonesome misery, never to marry and have children: "Vous leur donnez la vie, ils vous donnent la mort." "Ah! si j'étais riche,

si j'avais gardé ma fortune, si je ne la leur avais donnée, elles seraient ici, elles me lèchraient les joues de leurs baisers." Shakspeare's Gremio is shrewd enough to tell his dissembling acquaintance, whose story will not go down with *him*,—

"Sirrah, young gamester, your father were a fool
To *give thee all*, and, in his waning age,
Set foot under thy table. Tut ! a toy !
An old Italian fox is not so kind, my boy."

§ V.

LEAR'S CURSE

King Lear, Act 1, Sc. 4; Act 11, Sc. 4.

To Nature, "dear goddess," the old heathen king addresses his imprecations on his child. And what a torrent of curses Lear has at command ! what subtilty and vehemence combined ! the imagination as conceptive as the passion is blind and reckless. Concentrated wrath inflames every clause of the malediction to white heat. The outraged father cannot command himself, but he has at command every fancy that can intensify the horror of his curse. Retribution in its most rigid sense he invokes on the head of Goneril ; that his child's child may be a child of spleen, "a thwart disnatured torment to her .

"Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth !
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks ;
Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
To laughter and contempt ; that she may feel
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child !"

Blasts and fogs he imprecates upon Goneril. "The untented woundings of a father's curse pierce every sense about thee !" All this on the spur of the moment. But with lapse of time the strain of the malediction rather gains force than is abated. After he has left her, after he is with Regan, he renews and

even invigorates, aggravates, accumulates fresh agonies on the original terms of his curse :

“ All the stored vengeance of heaven fall
On her ingrateful top ! Strike her young bones,
You taking airs, with lameness !
You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames
Into her scornful eyes ! Infect her beauty,
You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun,
To fall and blast her pride ! ”

There need be nothing of insincerity or artifice in Regan's shocked interruption of expostulation, “ O the bless'd gods ! so will you wish on *me*, when the rash mood's on.” “ No, Regan,” the imperious father all too confidently protests, “ *thou* shalt never have my curse ” For he confides in her tenderness of nature. Those “ scornful eyes ” of Goneril he had just anathematized, he contrasts with Regan's . “ Her eyes ~~are~~ fierce, but thine do comfort, and not burn.” He was persuaded it was not in his mild-eyed, tender-hefted Regan to do as her fierce sister had been doing,—grudge his pleasures, cut off his train, bandy hasty words, scant his “ sizes ” (a word still dear to Granta), and oppose the bolt against his coming in. A very few minutes suffice to teach him how egregiously he has misread Regan. And so extreme is his exasperation, that of the two he would rather lodge with Goneril after all. But he will abjure all roofs, and with broken utterance he calls both sisters “ unnatural hags,” menaces them with vengeance of incommunicable horror, and flings out into night and wind and hail.

There are intense moments, it has been said, when man becomes a giant in suffering, and needs a Titanic language to vent such enormous sorrow, stupendous horror, and vast despair.

Scott's Highland Widow, on hearing from the priest the tidings of her son's doom, threw her eyes up to heaven, and uttered a shriek so unlike the voice of a human being, that the eagle which soared in mid-air answered it as she would have done the call of her mate. Then, clasping her hands close together, and holding them up towards heaven like

a sibyl announcing war and desolation, Elspat MacTavish poured forth, in impotent yet frightful rage, a tide of her deepest imprecations. On the friendly priest that had witnessed her boy's last moments, and not saved him, her fury turned. Might the eyes that looked tamely on the death of her fair-haired Hamish be melted in their sockets with ceaseless tears, shed for those nearest and dearest to the weeper! Might the ears that heard the death-knell of "her beautiful, her brave," be dead hereafter to all other sounds save the screech of the raven, and the hissing of the adder! Might the tongue that brought such fatal news be withered in his mouth—"or better, when thou wouldst pray with thy people, may the Evil One guide it, and give voice to blasphemies instead of blessings, until men shall fly in terror from thy presence, and the thunders of heaven be launched against thy head, and stop for ever thy cursing and accursed voice!"—With fixed gaze, in low rapt accents, as though she were a prophetess, Mosenthal's Deborah (identified with Ristori) pours rapidly into Albert's ears a curse upon the earth he tills, the wife he loves, the children she may bear. Describing that scene, Professor Morley tells how the curse seems to cleave to the man as he cowers under it. "May his child bear the mark of Cain, and languish in its mother's arms, . . . may his father thenceforth wander in darkness!" And all is sealed with a solemn intensity: "Maledetto, tre volte maledetto; E come all' Ebal Israel gridava Tre volte io grido: Amen! amen! amen!"

Paternal imprecation has its classical exponents in the *Œdipus Coloneus* of Sophocles, addressing his son Polynices,

Κακῶν κάκιστε, τὰς δὲ συλλαβῶν ἀρὰς
 Ἄς σοι καλῶμαι,—κ. τ. λ.,

and again in the *Theseus* of Racine, invoking the vengeance of Neptune on Hippolytus:

"Venge un malheureux père.
 J'abandonne ce traître à toute ta colère,
 Etouffe dans son sang ses desirs effrontés
 Thésée à tes fureurs connaîtra tes bontés"

Jamais père en effet fut-il plus outragé. But sometimes it is the son curses the sire, with equal vehemence; as in the opening chapter of the most autobiographical of Smollett's fictions, where the barbarity of the elder man produces a scene: so exasperated was the son at the cruelty inflicted on his wife, that "he had recourse to the most dreadful imprecations, and on his bare knees implored that heaven would renounce him if ever he should forget or forgive the barbarity of his sire" Kneeling it is that the figure that visits by midnight the fraudulent banker in Mr Reade's story, repeats the terrible imprecation beneath the spell of which that banker cowers with superstitious awe. Kneeling it is that the Jew of Malta, Barabas, in Marlowe's tragedy, invokes uttermost vengeance on his oppressors:

"The plagues of Egypt, and the curse of heaven,
Earth's barrenness, and all men's hatred
Inflict upon them, thou great *Primus Motor*!
And here, upon my knees, striking the earth,
I ban their souls to everlasting pains
And extreme tortures of the fiery deep,
That thus have dealt with me in my distress."

In the Greek drama, as already observed, we have a sort of parallel to Lear's malediction on Goneril, in that of *Œdipus* on his sons. And it seems as if *Œdipus* had been spared but to curse his children, and to die; so soon that mysterious death follows on those terrific execrations. The *Cleopatra* of Corneille, with a conspicuous absence of good cause for it, is similarly vehement in the closing scene of *Rodogune*, where she sums up her curses on Antiochus and his chosen bride:

"Puisse le ciel tous deux vous prendre pour victimes
Pussiez-vous ne trouver dedans votre union
Qu'horreur, que jalousie, et que confusion!
Et, pour vous souhaiter tous les malheurs ensemble,
Puisse naître de vous un fils qui vous ressemble!"

To the same category may be consigned the comprehensive curse of Camille in *Les Horaces*, of which Voltaire reports that *ces imprécations* have always been a fine bit for actresses to declaim, and a fortune to some of them. Especially

effective, from the wan lips of a Rachel, is the climax, where Camille would fain

“Voir le dernier Romain à son dernier soupir,
Moi seule en être cause, et mourir de plaisir !”

Webster's Duchess of Malfi abruptly changes her feverish resolve, “I will go pray,” into the frenzied one, “No, I'll go curse.” She could curse the stars, she cries, and the “three smiling seasons of the year, into a Russian winter; nay, the world to its first chaos.” On her persecutors she invokes “plagues, that make lanes through longest families,” to consume them; and “Let Heaven a little while cease crowning martyrs, to punish them !” Count Cenci, wicked beyond the wickedest, exults with hideous rapture “to hear the death of my accursed sons,” and pledges in a bowl of wine the Prince of Darkness himself,

“Who, if a father's curses, as men say,
Climb with swift wings after their children's souls,
And drag them from the very throne of Heaven,
Now triumphs in my triumph !”

His after curse of his daughter, and, by prevision, of his daughter's daughter, is too revoltingly cruel an expansion of Lear's, in regard of Goneril's offspring, to bear citation. There is in one of Shelley's miscellaneous poems a more presentable picture of a gray tyrant father standing on the topmost watch-turret as a death-boding spirit; to whose voice the mad weather seems tame;

“And with curses as wild
As e'er cling to child,
He devotes to the blast
The best, loveliest, and last
Of his name”

Much of his complexion is the father of Eugénie Grandet, execrating her as *maudit serpent de fille*! and cursing her with characteristic elaboration. Sympathy he gets none. But that other father in Balzac, that French Lear of private life, le Père Goriot, is at any rate commiserated in the

anguish that at last, and not till the very last, tortures him into the utterance of curses on his heartless daughters,—curses that, after all, he does not half mean as he utters them. “Ce sont des infames, des scélérates : je les abomine, je les maudis, je me relèverai, la nuit, de mon cercueil pour les remaudire.” Half mean it? He does not mean it at all, *le pauvre homme!* Next minute he is for despatching Eugène after them, and when the latter objects, “Mais vous les avez maudites,” “Qui est-ce qui a dit cela?” the old man exclaims, in dazed bewilderment: does not Eugène know that he loves his daughters, that he verily adores them?

The mother in Coleridge's *Three Graves* is more after the Shelley type of maledictory parent. The poet tells us in a prose preface how the incident is founded upon fact, how the woman, jealous of her child, and baulked of the husband she had proposed for herself, fell on her knees, and in a loud voice that approached to a scream, prayed for a curse on both of them. Mary's horror and anguish at this blasphemous outburst went far to heartbreak; so keenly she felt that

“Beneath the foulest mother's curse
No child could ever thrive
A mother is a mother still,
The holiest thing alive”

§ VI

WILD THREATS OF UNSPEAKABLE VENGEANCE

King Lear, Act ii., Sc. 4.

REGAN, as well as Goneril, has insulted and defied her father. Regan has even gone beyond Goneril in her tone of insult and defiance; and Lear's heart is broken. Yet he fain would not give way. He would not seem, or be seen, to bear it tamely, full of grief as age though he be. Rather would he be touched with noble anger. That rather than

have his man's cheeks stained with women's weapons, water-drops. Choking with proud wrath at such humiliation, he checks the tears that are gathering, and strives to bestir himself to thoughts only of resentment and revenge. His daughters shall not make him weep. They think they can. But no, he'll not weep : he has full cause of weeping, but that big breaking heart of his shall break into a hundred thousand flaws or ere he'll weep

“ No, you unnatural hags,
I will have such revenges on you both,
That all the world shall—I will do such things,—
What they are, yet I know not, but they shall be
The terrors of the earth ”

Not even to himself can he definitely shape, in the paroxysm of his frenzy, the forms his revenge shall take. He cannot articulate his passion. His wild and whirling words of indefinite menace are choked in the utterance. The world should ring with the frightful story ; his vengeance should be the world's talk and the world's wonder. But what his revenges should be, himself knew not yet. Nor if he knew, could tell, in that supreme moment of agonizing wrath.

Leonatus Posthumus, in *Cymbeline*, breaks into the like inarticulate strain, when wrought upon “ quite besides the government of patience ” by the lies of Iachimo, to the disparagement of Imogen :

“ O, that I had her here, to tear her limb-meal !
I will go there, and do 't ; i' the court ; before
Her father.—I'll do something — ”

a menace as significant as the *Quos ego* in Virgil,—leaving the *nescio quid* to the imagination. Menaces more definite in terms, if less tumultuous in passion, occur in Shakspeare by the score. There is Cleopatra's infuriated outburst on the messenger that brings word of Antony's engagement to Octavia ; which unfortunate courier is hailed by her, “ horrible villain ! ” and bidden begone, or she'll spurn his eyes like balls before her ; she'll unhair his head ; he shall be whipped with wire, and stewed in brine, smaiting in lingering pickle. No lack of

definiteness here in the details of particularized vengeance. Antony, again, more mad with Cleopatra than Telamon for his shield, ("the boar of Thessaly was never so embossed," or foaming at the mouth,) bids that "false soul of Egypt" that, like a night gipsy, has beguiled him, at fast and loose, to the very heart of loss,—“avaunt! vanish!” or he will give her her deserving, and blemish Cæsar’s triumph. Let patient Octavia plough her rival’s visage up with her prepared nails. “Teach me, Alcides, thou mine ancestor, thy rage . . . The witch shall die!” Prospero is of course grandly calm and self-possessed when he threatens Ariel. “I will rend an oak, and peg thee in his knotty entrails, till thou hast howled away twelve winters;” or when, again, he threatens Caliban with cramps and aches that shall make him roar till the beasts tremble at his din. And Touchstone is of course in Bombastes Furioso’s style, or Eracles’ vein, when he follows up and almost doubles up William with menaces of fatal import. “I will deal in poison with thee, or in bastinado, or in steel; . . . I will kill thee a hundred and fifty ways.” But Polixenes is in somewhat grim earnest when he warns Perdita against mating with his son, which warning disregarded, “I will devise a death as cruel for thee as thou art tender to ’t.” Autolycus may seem to but burlesque the tyrant’s strain when he foretells the doom of the old shepherd and his son: for the former, the finder and preserver of Perdita, “all deaths are too few, the sharpest too easy;” for the latter,—*he* shall be flayed alive, then anointed with honey and set on the head of a wasps’ nest, and there stand till he be three quarters and a dram dead, then recovered again with aqua-vitæ or some other hot infusion; then, raw as he is, be set against a brick wall, the sun looking with a southward eye upon him,—blown to death with flies. But in the last act we again hear, on the best authority, of Polixenes breathing threatening and slaughter against the shepherds aforesaid, son and sire: in vain these quaking rustics kneel and kiss the earth to him, and implore the royal clemency: “Bohemia stops his ears, and threatens them with divers deaths in death.” So that Autolycus was not altogether extravagant in extravaganza after all.

Chremes, in the *Heautontimorumenos*, storming against those who have been deluding and defrauding him, bursts into the unfinished exclamation,

“ At ne illud haud inultum, si vivo, ferent ,
Nam jam——”

And again, some thirty lines later, he thus promises that varlet Syrus such a dressing (*exornatum*), such a trimming (*pexum*), as he shall never forget to the latest hour of his rascally life :

“ Ego, si vivo, eum adeo exornatum dabo,
Adeo pexum, usque ut dum vivat, meminerit semper mei.”

When the Zealots carried off the wife of Simon, son of Gioras, to Jerusalem, hoping by this means to force him to terms, he came raging like a wild beast before the walls of the city,—he seized and tortured the old and unarmed people who ventured out of the gates, and is said to have scarcely refrained from mangling their bodies with his teeth. Some he sent back with both hands cut, vowing that unless his wife were returned, even that would he do to every man within the walls, and more also.

Catiline, infuriated by the abhorrent outcries of the senate, declared aloud, what he had said before to Cato, that since he was circumvented and driven headlong by his enemies, he would quench the flame* which was raised about him, by the common ruin. Of him, and with him of Cicero, one is reminded by Massinger's Sir Giles in this connexion :

“ How he foams at the mouth with rage !
Sir G. O that I had thee in my gripe,—I'd tear thee
Joint after joint !”

Or again of Douglas, in Miss (not yet by courtesy, and lapse of years, Mistress) Hannah More's once popular and belauded *Percy* :

* Ben Jonson makes him say, “ I will not burn without my funeral pile. I will have matter, timber. It shall be in the common fire, rather than in my own : for fall I will with all, ere fall alone.”—*Catiline*, Act iv., Sc. 2.

"Ye powers of hell, who take malignant joy
In human bloodshed, give me some dire means,
Wild as my hate, and desperate as my wrongs !"

It is no enemy of the great emperor Frederick II. who says of the horrible barbarity of his revenge against the revolted Parmesans, that he might seem to have been smitten with a judicial blindness, and to have laboured to extinguish the generous sympathies of mankind in his favour. His wrath against the ungrateful city, by him endowed with so many privileges, knew no bounds: of the thousand prisoners taken he put some to death before the walls day by day, and vowed to make the spectacle a daily one while the siege should last. One recalls Gibbon's phrase about the resentment of Diocletian at length "transporting him beyond the bounds of moderation," so that he declared, in a series of cruel edicts, his intention of abolishing the Christian name. Bloody edicts, M Guizot calls them, written with a dagger, and enjoining the judges to strain their ingenuity in devising new punishments.

Upbraiding King Robert III for his breach of agreement in the matter of Rothesay's marriage, the Earl of March, receiving an evasive reply, broke out into the most furious language, and left the monarch with a threat that he would either see his daughter righted, or take a revenge which should convulse the kingdom. And away to England the enraged thane sped, to carry out his wild words of vengeance. The vengeance taken by Scotland's James I. on the family of Albany is also memorable in history, so unbounded was it in its range, so "unpardonably cruel and disgusting" in some of its particulars. The king's deep revenge seemed, as Tytler describes it, delighted to glut itself in the extermination of every scion of that unfortunate house. The royal style was that of Baptista in Beaumont and Fletcher—"which I vow I will revenge on the whole family:

"Their family shall repair't; it shall be to them
Like a plague, when the dog-star reigns most hot"

William de Blois, Lord of Treslong, and Admiral of Holland

and Zeeland, when his negligence as naval commander was censured by the States-General (1584), went up and down proclaiming in his wrath that he would do that which should make all the women and children in the Netherlands shriek and tremble. What this nameless horror was to be he never divulged. The States were used to big threats, vaguely enveloped in wild and whirling words. Queen Elizabeth, some years later, vowed to their envoy Caron, in a towering passion, that if the States deceived her, she would take such vengeance that men should talk of it for ever and ever.

The session of Tobacco-Parliament dated, in Mr Carlyle's history, Dec. 6, 1732, presents to us his choleric majesty Frederick William in a white heat at foreign intrigues, and bewildering Speaker Grumkow with a torrent of exclamations, in the key of this dominant theme "*Ja, ja—I will do things that will surprise them—I—I will,*" etc, etc, in short, a Germanized rendering of Lear's "I will have such revenges"—not to be told, hardly to be guessed. Beattie somewhere speaks of those soul-harrowing expressions to be found in Shakspeare, which are so infinitely preferable to the verbose rants of Dryden.

If ever Shakspeare rants, Macaulay has remarked, it is not when his imagination is hurrying him along, but when he is hurrying his imagination along,—when his mind is for a moment jaded,—when, as was said of Euripides, he resembles a lion, who excites his own fury by lashing himself with his tail. Shakspeare is too much in earnest with Lear to let him rant when menacing revenge upon his unnatural daughters. Revenge the old man will have,—revenges, supreme and startling,—but what they shall be,* it passes him to tell as yet. Restraint, with constraint, is laid upon him. Words are

* O'Keeffe tells us of Garrick, "I liked him best in Lear. His saying, in the bitterness of his anger, 'I will do such things—what they are I know not,' and his sudden recollection of his own want of power, were so pitiable as to touch the heart of every spectator."—*Recollections of John O'Keeffe*, vol. 1., p. 81.

wanting, because ideas are too. The Don Salluste of *Ruy Blas* threatens in something of the same portentous style :

“Je me vengerai, va ! Comment ? je ne sais pas ;
Mais je veux que ce soit effrayant !”

So Beatrice in *The Cenci* :

“Ay, something must be done ,
What, yet I know not—something which shall make
The thing that I have suffered but a shadow
In the dread lightning which avenges it ,
Brief, rapid, irreversible, destroying
The consequence of what it cannot cure
Some such thing is to be endured or done
When I know what, I shall be still and calm,
And never anything will move me more.
But now !——”

When the Count, in Soulie's *La Lionne*, menaces the artist: with revenge, and the latter asks, “Que voulez-vous dire ?” the rejoinder is ready, “Je ne le sais trop moi-même . mais je vous en avertis” *Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo*. In Firmilian's style,

“a hurricane of wrath
Is raging in my soul—If it burst forth,
'Twere better for thee that within the waste
Thou met'st a ravening tigress, or wert bound
In a lone churchyard where hyaenas prowl”

The furious painter in *Peregrine Pickle* will make his tormentor a monument of his wrath—will not “leave him a windpipe for the hangman to stop, at the end of another rebellion.” Shaftesbury philosophizes on the rage and fury of certain human windbags as resembling the grotesque figures and dragon-faces to be seen on old buildings, which, with all their grimace, are as harmless to the people without, as they are useless to the building within. “Exceeding fierceness, with perfect inability and impotence, makes the highest ridicule.” Uncle John, in the American tale of the Dismal Swamp, when overtaken, as periodically he seems to have been, by a tropical whirlwind of passion, would stamp,

tear, and swear, with most astounding energy—cursing the negroes and the white folk, right and left, all round, and pouring out awful threats, with regard to the former, of cutting up and skinning them alive, to all which commotion and bluster the negroes would listen, rolling the whites of their eyes and sticking their tongues in their cheeks, with an air of obvious relish, so entirely negative was known to be the result of these clamorous outpourings

How shall the author of *Barchester Towers* sing the divine wrath of Mr. Slope, or how invoke the tragic muse to describe the rage which swelled the celestial bosom of Bishop Proudie's chaplain? Such an undertaking by no means befits the low-heeled buskin of modern fiction; and therefore does this readiest of writers of modern fiction call to mind the painter who put a veil over Agamemnon's face, and the god who, when he resolved to punish the rebellious winds, abstained from mouthing empty threats "We will not attempt to tell with what mighty surgings of the inner heart Mr. Slope swore to revenge himself on the woman who had disgraced him." But he is shown to us standing motionless, undecided, glaring with his eyes, thinking of the pains and penalties of Hades, and meditating how he might best devote his enemy to the infernal gods with all the passion of his accustomed eloquence. "He longed in his heart to be preaching at her. 'Twas thus that he was ordinarily avenged of sinning mortal men and women. Could he at once have ascended his Sunday rostrum and fulminated at her such denunciations as his spirit delighted in, his bosom would have been greatly eased." *Cette femme-là*, as one of M. Charles de Bernard's heroes has it, *m'a trop vexé, je serais un lâche si je n'en tirais pas une vengeance éclatante*. The infuriated husband, in Crabbe's *Tales of the Hall*, devises rare tortures for the guilty—he would "bring death in view, and then the stroke suspend,

"And draw out tortures till his life should end :
Oh, it should stand recorded in all time,
How they transgress'd, and he avenged the crime !
In this bad world should all his business cease,
He would not seek—he would not taste of peace ;

But wrath should live till vengeance had her due,
And with his wrath his life should perish too."

Vengeance, sweet vengeance ! mumbles the clown in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Maid of the Inn*,—"I'll be revenged monstrously, suddenly, and insatiably" Falkland bids Caleb Williams, beware of having to expiate his offence in "hours and months and years of a torment of which as yet you have not the remotest idea. Remember, I am not talking at random I do not utter a word that . . . shall not be executed to the severest letter!" And Caleb confessedly had but too much reason to believe that his master's words were not empty threats; and Caleb confessedly envied the condemned wretch upon the scaffold, envied the victim of the Inquisition in the midst of his torture; for these knew what they had to suffer, whereas he had only to imagine everything terrible, and then say, The fate reserved for me is worse than this!

Arbaces the Egyptian is vigorously described by his author as planning unspeakable vengeance on the boy Greek that has crossed his passions and thwarted his designs: "But for the method of my vengeance? Of that let me ponder well Oh, Até, if thou art indeed a goddess, fill me with thy direst inspiration!" And then we see him sinking into an intent reverie, revolving scheme after scheme, and at last striking his breast and groaning aloud, with the desire of unbounded vengeance, and a sense of his impotence to compass that illimitable design Contrast with the temperament of Arbaces that of the same author's Welford, who soliloquizes, "Other men's vengeance comes from hatred,—a base, rash, unphilosophical sentiment! mine comes from scorn—the only wise state for the reason to rest in. Other men's vengeance ruins themselves—mine shall save me" Mannion's elaborate vengeance on Basil sounds the depths of malignity the most diabolical. "Do you call this a very madness of revenge?" he asks his victim by letter: "It is the only occupation in life for which your mutilation of me has left me fit; and I accept it, as a work worthy of my deformity. In the prospect of linking you to your own infamy, wherever you go, . . .

of tracking you from place to place, . . . of watching how you bear this hunting through life, that never quite hunts you down, how long you resist the poison influence, as slow as it is sure, of a crafty tongue that cannot be silenced, of a denouncing presence that cannot be fled, of a damning secret torn from you and exposed afresh each time you have hidden it—in such prospects as these, and in such a future as they disclose, there is the promise of a nameless delight which it sometimes fevers, sometimes chills my blood to think of” The old man in *Armada* who consults the lawyer about Miss Gwilt, declares that after robbing him of his happiness, his honour, and his last hope in life, she has left him nothing but his “old man’s longing, slow and sly, and strong and changeless, for revenge. . . . Revenge that I will buy with the last farthing of my hoarded money and the last drop of my stagnant blood” Vindictive old Ghysbrecht, once in the saddle, seemed to gather in a moment unnatural vigour; and the figure that, as Mr Reade paints it, went flying to Tergou was truly weird-like and terrible, so old and wizened was the face; so white and reverend (as in *Lear*) the streaming hair; so baleful the eye, so fierce the fury which shook the bent frame that went spurring “like mad;” while the quavering voice yelled, “I’ll make their hearts ache. I’ll make their hearts ache. I’ll make their hearts ache. All of them. All! —all! —all!”

Margaret threatens Geoffrey Ludlow, in *Land at Last*, “I will be revenged on you in a manner of which you little dream, but which shall break your heart and spirit, and humble your pride to the dust.” Scott’s Ulrica gives the cue to feminine furies of this complexion: “No man shall aid me, but the ears of all men shall tingle to hear of the deed which I shall dare to do!” His Highland Widow’s threats of vengeance, obscurely expressed, yet terrible in their tenor, used frequently to extort, through fear of her maledictions, the relief which was denied to her necessities.

Better, by far, keep to obscure expression of such menaces, if they are meant to be really telling. While vague, they may verge on the sublime; in definite detail, they are apt

to merge in the ridiculous.* Of both the sublime and the ridiculous there is a touch in Molière's *Alceste*,—but then we know there is but a step from the one to the other. He is at one time transported beyond bounds by what he deems the treasonable perfidy of Célimène—*une perfidie qui ne saurait trouver de trop grands châtimens*; and therefore he feels and says that

“je puis tout permettre à mes ressentiments.
 Oui, oui, redoutez tout après un tel outrage ;
 Je ne suis plus à moi, je suis tout à la rage :
 Je cède aux mouvements d'une juste colère,
 Et je ne reponds pas de ce que je puis faire ”

* Witness the explosion of the irate physician in the *Cloister and the Hearth*, who gloats on the bilious vomit, then cold sweat *plus* deadly stupor, then bloody vomit, then madness, after that, black vomit, and then mortal convulsions, for which he pronounces Gerard booked beyond repeal. Witness Ben Jonson's Corvino, detailing the methods of his menaced vengeance on Celia—in all its variety of rare devices. Jonson's Lady Frampul is merry in her malice of invention against the “errant tailor” in his *New Inn* the rogue deserves a torture, she and Prue agree, to be cropped with his own scissors, and have the lease of his house cut out in measures, and himself stretched on his own yard, and burnt in the hand with his own pressing-iron, etc. Mirthfully malicious too is Margaret in Jerrold's *Wedding-Gown*, when she menaces her aunt, “I'll have such revenge ! I'll spend the pin-money you talk of in marmosets and parrots ; my house shall be open to all the world, yet my husband feel the only stranger in it. I'll turn his whole fortune into china—I'll break his heart—and I'll—I'll call you old aunty to my dying day.” Beethoven whimsically vows characteristic vengeance on his music publisher for illiberal dealing in respect of the Sonata in C minor (Op. 111) : “If he attempts any of his usual impertinence on this subject, I will sing him in person a bass aria in his warehouse which shall cause it and all the street (Graben) to ring !”—*Beethoven's Letters*, II, 112.

CHAPTER VI.

Gloster and his Sons.

§ I.

THE noble Edgar tells his base-born brother, that subtle master of villany, Edmund, that to his being base-born may their father's calamities be traced :

“The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us
The dark and vicious place where thee he got,
Cost him his eyes.”

In the very first scene of the tragedy, Gloster, in Edmund's presence, takes shame to himself for the frank avowal that he is his father, and Edmund, as Coleridge remarks of that scene, “hears the circumstances of his birth spoken of with a most degrading and licentious levity.” Hence the critic applauds the “excellent judgment,” provident for the claims of the moral sense, or of poetic justice, with which Shakspeare precludes all excuse and palliation of the guilt incurred, and so helps to reconcile the feelings of the spectators to the horrors of Gloster's after-sufferings—at least, of rendering them somewhat less unendurable (for Coleridge will not disguise his conviction that in this one point the tragic in this play has been urged beyond the outermost mark and *ne plus ultra* of the dramatic) Gloster might say with the Man of Uz, Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my prime. Like Samson he had had his Dalilah days of dalliance, and as with Samson the Philistines had put out his eyes. History as well as fiction is fertile in illustrations of Edgar's text of divine justice and its

control of men's pleasant vices—its conversion of them into instruments of chastisement. Alison reads this moral in the biography of the Czar Alexander I, and the deaths of his three natural children—the third of whom he so passionately loved, and who died on the eve of wedlock. "The hand of fate was upon him, and he was to be pierced to the heart through" what Sir Archibald, with characteristic laxity of mixed metaphor, styles "the fruit of his own irregularities" "Verily," cried Maltravers, in the fall of life, "the sins of my youth have risen against me, and the curse has come home to roost" Just when the demand was most urgent upon Almagro's energies, he was rendered incapable of exertion by the "result of early excesses," which had shattered his constitution. "It was a hard penalty, occurring at this crisis," writes the historian of the conquest of Peru, "for the sins, perhaps, of earlier days." For punishment, as Jeremy Taylor takes it, is but the latter part of sin, it is not a new thing and distinct from it: "If we will kiss the hyæna, or clip the lamia about the neck, we have as certainly chosen the tail, and its venomous embraces, as the face and lip." *Culpam pœna premit comes.*

Lessons manifold, perhaps, may be read between the lines in Byron,—

"Begot in sin, to die in shame,
My life began and ends the same.
As err'd the sire, so err'd the son"

Fortune never tired of punishing England's Henry the Second, says the French Michelet: "He had fixed his heart on pleasure, sensuality, and the natural affections; and was punished as lover and as father." One son is the curse of Shakspeare's Gloster; but it is enough, that son is, for wickedness, for fertility of device in what is most evil, and for audacity in carrying out his devices, a host in himself.

Edmund wittingly has to deal, as a double-dealer, "with a credulous father, and a brother noble," Edgar the legitimate, "whose nature is so far from doing harms, that he suspects none," and upon whose simple honesty, therefore, Edmund's

practices ride easy. From the first drawing up of the curtain, as Coleridge puts it, Edmund has stood before us in the united strength and beauty of earliest manhood: gifted as he is with high advantages of person, and further endowed by nature with a powerful intellect and a strong energetic will, pride is the sin that most easily besets him—pride inoculated, by envy and discontent at his family position, with a venom not its own, and a “lust for that power which in its blaze of radiance would hide the dark spots on his disc” The result is shown to be a blind ferment of vindictive working towards the occasion and causes of his inferior status—especially towards the brother whose stainless birth and lawful honours were the constant remembrancers of his own debasement, and were ever in the way to prevent all chance of its being unknown, or overlooked and forgotten. “Twice has Shakspeare portrayed absolute villains,” says the elder Schlegel, referring to Iago and to Richard the Third. But Sara Coleridge claims to see in Shakspeare’s works a triumvirate of thoroughly evil men; for Edmund might have been named with the blood tyrant Richard and the “demi-devil” Iago; and to Edmund she would apply Hamlet’s character of his uncle, and call him a “remorseless, treacherous, *kindless* villain.” In a conversation with Crabb Robinson, in 1811, Charles Lamb contended that Shakspeare never gives characters wholly odious and detestable; and when his companion referred (after citing Claudius and Lady Macbeth) to Edmund, Lamb considered *his* character as the result of provocation on account of his illegitimacy.

There is perhaps a dash of Edmund perceptible in Herod’s elder son, Antipater, “dark, designing, and unscrupulously ambitious,” as our Christian historian of the Jews describes him,—the artful youth who, from Rome, steadfastly pursued, by means of letters, his insidious designs, till the mind of Herod was so inflamed, that he determined to accuse his other sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, before the emperor at Aquileia; and Herod in fact opened the charge by accusing them of unnatural obstinacy and disobedience, and of entering into criminal practices against his life.

The charges failed. But Antipater, sometimes insidiously exculpating, sometimes artfully accusing his brothers, kept the mind of Herod in a continued fever of suspicious excitement. After the death of the king's favourite brother, Pheroras, a dark and horrible secret came to light: Antipater was clearly proved to have conspired with Pheroras to poison his old and doting father, in order to secure and accelerate his own succession. In another phase of character and condition, there is something of Edmund in that true son (though illegitimate) of Frederick II, the brilliant, witty, debauched, and impious Manfred, who gloried in being born out of wedlock, like so many of the heroes and gods of antiquity. Schiller's Francis, in *The Robbers*, is Edmund almost all over, both as brother and as son: he has heard a great deal of twaddle, he says, about the so-called ties of blood—enough to make a sober man beside himself. He, for his part, is fain and free to swallow all such formularies. "The man who fears nothing is as powerful as he who is feared by everybody." Honour, to him, is merely a convenient coin, to be laid out to advantage; and conscience, a sort of useful scarecrow to frighten sparrows away from cherry trees. Like Edmund, Francis can affect to be mighty brotherly, as well as a devoted son, and can pretend to side with both. He is just the dissembler to answer to Bacon's description, in the essay on Cunning, of some who procure themselves to be surprised "at such times as it is like the party, that they work upon, will suddenly come upon them, and be found with a letter in their hand, or doing somewhat which they are not accustomed, to the end that they may be apposed [questioned] of those things which of themselves they are desirous to utter." Blifil is another of the unblest brotherhood, but a cruder specimen, without the gallant bearing and jovial audacity that makes Edmund so dashing an adventurer—a chevalier as distinctly *sans peur* as he is distinctively not *sans reproche*.

§ II.

DUPES OF PLANETARY INFLUENCE

King Lear, Act 1, Sc 2.

GLOSTER'S sombre musings on the dismal aspect of the times, and on their possible or probable connexion with "those late eclipses in the sun and moon" that "portend no good to us," only excite the derisive satire, in soliloquy, of his graceless Edmund. That keen observer of mankind calls it "the excellent foppery of the world," that when we are sick in fortune (often the surfeit of our own behaviour) we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars, as if we were villains by necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves, and traitors by spherical predominance; drunkards and liars by an enforced obedience of planetary influence, "and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on" Admirable evasion of transgressing man, to lay his transgression to the charge of a star!

Sapiens dominabitur astris As a parallel passage to that saw may be adduced what Plautus says of the wise man, that he surely carves out his own destiny: *Sapiens quidem pol ipse fingit fortunam sibi* The stars had formerly, as Mr. Fonblanque says, to answer for all crimes and mis-carriages; but since the improvements in astronomy, they have been found innocent, and are no longer responsible for our calamities. "Had they not been timely set right in public opinion, the Georgium Sidus [he is writing in 1831] would have borne the blame of all the ills that have afflicted the country. Now, however, the stars and garters of the Peers are the only ones apostrophized as malignant causes of mischief" "Chide not the distant sun," exhorts Dr Young, in his *Complaint*: "the sun is innocent. . . . It is thy folly, not thy fate." Another Doctor, and of quite another sort, observes in his shrewd way, that the thriftless man in middle or low life who says, in common phrase, that he was born under a threepenny planet, and therefore shall never be worth

a groat, finds some satisfaction in imputing his unprosperity to the stars, and casting upon them the blame he ought to take to himself. In vain did an old Almanac-maker say to such men, of the Creator, in a better strain than was often attained by the professors of his craft,—

“He made the Stars to be an aid unto us,
Not (as is fondly dream’d) to help undo us :
Much less without our fault to ruinate
By doom of irrecoverable Fate. . . .
Be wise in Him, and if just cause there be,
The Sun and Moon shall stand and wait on thee.”

When De Winter asks Athos if he has remarked of what a blood-red colour the moon is to-night, “Count,” replies Athos, “in a situation so precarious as ours, it is the earth we ought to examine, and not the heavens.” It is a salient point in Overbury’s “Character” of a Noble Spirit, that “he licēceth not his weaknesse, to weare fate, but knowing reason to be no idle gift of nature, he is the steersman of his owne destiny.” Varney—not Scott’s, but Lytton’s—had a habit of dwelling with a bitter eloquence, which his natural malignity made forcible, on the injustice of the world to superior intellect, and was at the same time a great accuser of Fate; it being the illogical weakness of some evil natures to lay all their crimes, and the consequences of crime, upon Destiny. La Fontaine’s moral, if old-fashioned, is by no means obsolete :

“Mais je sais que chacun impute, en cas pareil,
Son bonheur à son industrie ;
Et si de quelque échec notre faute est suivie,
Nous disons injure au Sort
Chose n’est ici plus commune.
Le bien, nous le faisons ; le mal, c’est la Fort une
On a toujours raison, le Destin toujours tort.”

Rebecca the Jewess disposes of the fatalistic rant of the Templar with the remark, “Thus do men throw on fate the issue of their own wild passions.” The Lady Hameline upbraids Hayraddin as a monster, because the Zingaro had said the stars decreed her marriage, and caused her to write—oh, wretch that she was. “And so they *had* decreed your

union," said Hayraddin, "had both parties been willing—but think you the blessed constellations can make any one wed against his will?" Lewis the Eleventh himself, in the same historical fiction, at one time urges his astrologer-royal to confess that his sovereign is a dupe, himself an impostor, his pretended science a dream, and the planets which shine above us as little influential of our destiny, as their shadows, when reflected in the river, are capable of altering its course. Vivian Grey owns to the philosophic Beckendorff that he sometimes cannot refrain from believing that those mysterious luminaries have more influence over our fortunes than modern times are disposed to believe; but his friend at once discards all such fantasies, as tending merely to enervate our mental energies, and paralyse all human exertion. "It is the belief in these, and a thousand other deceits I could mention, which teach man that he is not the master of his own mind, but the ordained victim or the chance sport of circumstances, that makes millions pass through life unimpressive as shadows; and has gained for this existence the stigma of a vanity which it does not deserve" Fate, destiny, chance, he dismisses as idle words. a man's fate is his own temper; and according to that will be his opinion, says Beckendorff, as to the particular manner in which the course of events is regulated. "We are free agents, and man is more powerful than matter. I recognize no intervening influence between that of the established course of nature, and my own mind." Racine's hero is heroic in the utterance,

"Ah, ne nous formons point ces indignes obstacles.
L'honneur parle, il suffit, ce sont là nos oracles.
Les dieux sont de nos jours les maîtres souverains."

It was held that the Master of Ravenswood, on the night fatal to him and to his house, evoked, by the bitter exclamations of his despair, some evil fiend, under whose malignant influence the future tissue of incidents was woven. "Alas!" sighs his historian, "what fiend can suggest more desperate counsels than those adopted under the guidance of our own violent and unresisted passions?" The homely

admonition of an essay-writer on false steps in life, is seldom impertinent, that as years go by, we can acquire an amazing knack of looking upon past errors as things quite extraneous to our own individuality : the false step appears like some hereditary misfortune for which we are to be pitied rather than blamed, and which should be spoken of tenderly, as we should speak of the fault of another.

“ To curse those stars that men say govern us,
To rail at fortune, to fall out with fate,
And tax the general world, will help me nothing
Alas ! I am the same still , neither are they
Subject to helps or hurts , our own desires
Are our own fates, our own stars all our fortune ,
Which, as we sway them, so abuse and bless us ”

That, at least, is the conviction of Constantia in *The Chances*, as altered by his Grace of Buckingham from Beaumont and Fletcher. To the same effect speaks Ezmont in Aaron Hill's *Alzira*, when that heroine expresses her apprehension of omens and fateful days :

“ Quit these vain fears, these superstitious dreams
Of unconfiding ignorance. What day ?
What omens ? Ourselves, who choose our acts,
Make our own days, or happy, or accursed.”

Their own bad hearts impelled them, not the influence of the stars, says Gordon of Illo and Terzky, in *Wallenstein's Tod*. And Illo himself had assured star-gazing Wallenstein long before, in the second act of the *Piccolomini*, with an earnest “ O believe me,

“ In your own bosom are your destiny's stars
Confidence in yourself, prompt resolution,
This is your Venus , and the sole malignant,
The only one that harmeth you, is Doubt.”

§ III

ROUSED FROM REVERIE

"Edgar. How now, brother Edmund? What serious contemplation are you in?"—*King Lear*, Act 1, Sc 2

IT is a favourite device in works of imagination in general, of the drama in particular, to have one of the characters surprised in a brown study, and cross-examined with more or less of point and raillery by another. Sometimes it is the rogue or villain of the piece who is in a reverie, or affects to be in one, and it is some frank, free, open soul that questions him,—as here, with Edgar arousing Edmund. Sometimes it is a gentle spirit absorbed in wistful meditation who is bantered and baited, quizzed and cross-questioned by some vulgar, vapouring gabbler,—as, in *All's Well that Ends Well*, Parolles accosts Helena, and impudently surmises the theme of her musings. In a very different situation, her noble mistress discerns and recognizes what she tells Helena is "the mystery of your loneliness," having "found your salt tears' head" Margaret hails the friar, in Robert Greene's old play of *Bacon and Bungay*, "How cheer you, sir? a penny for your thought," as again Rossaline does Felice in Marston's *Antony and Melinda*. "Good Felice, why art thou so sad? a penny for thy thought, man." * *Vous semblez pensif*, Maxime

* The prizing a muser's meditations at a penny is of old date, and, in some circles, keeps in use still. Mr Thackeray had an old-fashioned kindness for the phrase "A penny for little Hetty's thoughts," says her mamma, in the *Virgmans*, coming to the window to lead the girl away. Harry Warrington, in the same story, taken to see Mr Home's *Douglas*, is deep in meditation upon other matters; "And when Mrs Lambert offered him a penny for his thoughts, he said, 'That he thought, Young Norval, Douglas, What-d'ye-call-'em, the fellow in white satin—who looked as old as his mother—was very lucky to be able to distinguish himself so soon I wish I could get a chance, Aunt Lambert,' he said drumming on his hat." "Twopence halfpenny for your thoughts, Fokey!" too liberally bids the elegant Miss Rougemont to poor Foker, at the Richmond dinner in *Pendennis*. In Mr. Reade's *Put Yourself in*

tells Cinna, who replies *Ce n'est pas sans sujet*, and is at once questioned, "Puis-je d'un tel chagrin savoir quel est l'objet?" Dante, in the second circle of L'*Inferno*, hears words—it is the story of Rimini—which make him downward bend his looks, and hold them there so long, that his guide's demand is, "What art thou pondering?" Juba questions Syphax, in *Cato*, on the gloomy subject of his absorbed thoughts—and he does it in the spirit of Artaxerxes the king when questioning Nehemiah, "Why is thy countenance sad?—this is nothing but sorrow of heart." But at least it was not absorption in trifles, like Horace's

"Nescio quid meditans nugarum, totus in illis."

The *Torquato Tasso* of Goethe opens with one Leonora's appeal to another, "What is it? Let a friend partake thy thought." Rosinburg, in *Basyl*, demands of that hero, "What.

His Place, at Bayne's "A penny for your thoughts, sir!" Henry Little started, as men do who are roused from deep contemplation; however, he soon recovered himself, and, with a sort of rude wit of his own, he held out his hand for the penny; and the other humoured him, by fumbling in his pocket, and giving him a stamp. The penultimate chapter of Dr. Mayo's *Never Again* opens with "A penny for your thoughts!" exclaimed Luther Lansdale, as he quietly raised the latch of Mr. Planly's door, and stepped into the room without disturbing the old inventor, who, profoundly buried in thought, had not heeded the young man's preliminary tap—"My dear boy, you would be cheated at that price. They are not worth the money." "They seemed to be far enough away, at any rate," said Luther. "Yes, a thousand years ahead, at least." Bishop Warburton's biographer—a name that's never mentioned now—tells us of that celebrated man, that when young he was exceedingly "absent" in company, and became the butt of it in consequence, and that one evening an acquaintance, to raise the usual laugh, started the usual query, "Well, Mr. Warburton, and what will you take for your thoughts?" and got the unusual reply, "I know very well what you and others think of me; but I believe I shall one day or other convince the world that I am not so ignorant, nor so great a fool, as I am taken to be." Like the hero in *Le Collier de la Reine*, when he tells the man he has surprised by name, "I am not what you take me for," and is answered, or questioned, "Pardieu! sir, do you guess thoughts, as well as names?" "I can guess the subject of your reverie," Miss Bingley in *Pride and Prejudice* tells Mr. Darcy, who replies curtly, "I should imagine not." Frank

mighty thoughts engage my pensive friend?" So Ethwald to Ethelbert, in another of the Plays on the Passions,

"How, Ethelbert, my friend,
What vision from the nether world of spites
Now rises to thine eyes, thus on the ground
So fix'd and sternly bent?"

So again Cathrina questions Orra, in another of them. So Gonzalos to Rovani, in the *Separation*. "Ha! muttering to thyself! What are thy thoughts?" "Faith! ill-conditioned, moody, foolish thoughts, such as lone men, whose heart no kind mate cheers, alone could harbour—Heaven forgive me for it!" So in the same prolific playwright's comedy of *Enthusiasm*, "You are grave, Mr. Cleimont," begins Lady Shrewdly, "and I trace pondering lines upon your brow; may one know what engages your serious contemplation?"

Churchill, in *Emma*, essays to put life into a listless evening-party by abruptly addressing them *en masse*, "Ladies and gentlemen, I am ordered by Miss Woodhouse to say that she desires to know what you are all thinking of." Mr Knightley wants to know from herself if Miss Woodhouse means that? and Emma is prompt with a laughing "Oh, no, no! upon no account in the world."—Here again we have Rachel Ray in a brown study, startled by Cherry. "A penny for your thoughts," said Cherry "Oh, you have so startled me!" said Rachel. "Then I suppose your thoughts were worth more than a penny"—Catherine Morland, in *Northanger Abbey*, is pressed by Mr Tilney in the ballroom to tell him, "What are you thinking of so earnestly?" And when she colours, and replies, "I was not thinking of anything,"—he calls the evasion artful and deep, and would rather be told at once that she will not tell him; and so at once secures his alleged wish, for the answer is, "Well, I will not"—The astonished Mr. Meagles, when Arthur Clennam "revokes," in a reverie, at their old-fashioned rubber, inquires reproachfully of his partner, "Why, what are you thinking of, my good sir?" "I beg your pardon Nothing" "Think of something, next time, there's a dear fellow," said Mr Meagles Alfred de Musset's Bertha,—of what is she thinking, there, in her silent room? Many are the conjectures started; but none of them sentimental, still less sublime, and here is the close of the series

"Perhaps of her dinner—her brother—
The state of her soul or her shawl,
Perhaps of myself or some other—
Perhaps of nothing at all!"

Victor Hugo's Cromwell is naturally ill-at-ease at observing his favourite daughter wrapt in contemplation of an obnoxious object: she *rêve l'œil fixé sur la croisée de Charles I^{er}*, and "A quoi donc pensez-vous, Frances?" is about the least he can say.

In Lodge's *Rosalynd, or Euphues' Golden Legacye* (1590)—one of the presumed originals of his contemporary, Shakespeare's, *As You Like It*,—Rosadet (the same as Gamelyn in *The Coke's Tale*, and as Orlando,) "ruminating of his melancholy passions," is surprised by Saladyne (who answers to Oliver), who "seeing his brother in a brown study, and to forget his wonted reverence, thought to shake him out of his dumps, thus. 'Sirrah,' quoth he, 'what, is your heart on your halfpenny, or are you saying a dirge for your father's soul? What, is my dinner ready?'"—or as that momentous question is tersely worded in the old *Tale of Gamelyn*, "What, is our metè yare?" A question that maddens Gamelyn into swearing that from henceforth, "Thou shalt y go bake, luke, thyself; I wol not be thy coke."

Certainly variety need not be awanting in the range of answers on record to the almost stereotyped question in Gresset's *Le Méchant*, as put by Cléon to Florise, "Mais quelle rêverie occupe donc votre âme?" There is the nobly impressive answer of dying Richard Hooker to Dr Saravia—that he was meditating the number and nature of angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in heaven, "and O that it might be so on earth!" And at the opposite term of the series there is the reply of the editor of the *World* to a lady in church, who seeing him look thoughtful, asked what he was thinking of. "The next World," he said, a pun at once in season and out of season, but mostly out. M. Autran, the French poet *des Beaux Jours*, is concerned even in the meditations of Norman oxen; and his curiosity as to the subject of their ruminations is not to be appeased except by one or two conjectural guesses at truth on his part:

"Ils rêvent en silence, et laissent les yeux vagues
D'un regard nonchalant se perdre à l'horizon.

A quoi songent ainsi, dans leur calme attitude,
Ces anciens du troupeau, semblables à des dieux ?
Est-ce au maître inconnu de cette solitude ?
Est-ce à l'immensité de la mer et des cieux ?”

The godlike ancients of the herd seem to occasion as much interest to the French poet, on the sheer score of rumination, as mankind at large did to a recently deceased and philosophic observer of them, who averred that, so dark and wondrous are the workings of our nature, that there are scarcely any of us who would not be arrested by the countenance of one in deep reflection—who would not pause and long to pierce into the mysteries that were agitating that world, most illimitable by nature, but often most narrowed by custom—the world within. Another writer of distinction speaks of questioners who strike the chord of the ruminant's thought, after a fashion which every one knows and nobody can explain. But the guessers must often be out; and perhaps, dealing with the mass of men, “mostly fools,” as Mr Carlyle has it, the safest guess would be that the biped ruminants, like the four-legged ones of the field, are, in simple truth, thinking of nothing. So it is with one of M. Soulié's demoiselles: “Julie semblait pensive. A quoi pensait-elle dans ces moments-là ?” “A rien, eût-elle répondu, si on l'eût interrogée, et elle eût dit la vérité.” And so wide of the mark may, and often must, the guesses be, that those who simply “ask for information,” and out of candid curiosity, are likely to form at all times a large majority.

Amru, the friend of Mohammed, finds the prophet in the wilderness, his face overcast and preoccupied, and murmurs, “O Mohammed, art thou sad ?” But still the prophet seems as though he has neither seen nor heard his friend.

“Amru then arose,
And crept a little nearer, and sat close
Against the skirting of his robe, and said,
‘Mohammed, peace be with thee !’—Still his head
Mohammed lifted not, nor answer'd aught.
Then Amru said again, ‘What is thy thought,
Mohammed ?’”

That is in the Mahomedan æra of *Chronicles and Characters*; and in an after volume, and a later epoch, we have Muzufer at the Emperor's banquet, sitting on his lord's right, and forgetting even to smile,

"So much his mind is busy at the task
Of plotting how to slip from life's main masque
Silently, unperceived, by some side-way,
Into safe darkness, ere God's Judgment lay
Pride's revel all in ruins. For he read
Strange writing on the walls.—Alexius said,
'What wise and weighty matter is astir
Behind those knitted brows?'"

The fifth act is already advanced of the tragedy of *Wallenstein's Death*, when the doomed man, sunk into profound melancholy, is questioned by his wife, "What art thou brooding on?"—for his look bewrayeth him. So the Laurence too, dear to Jocelyn,

"S'assied à mes genoux, me regarde en silence,
Me demande pourquoi je pleure, à qui je pense?"

though quite soon enough Jocelyn has to return the anxious inquiry, asking, in his turn,

"Que se passe-t-il donc, Laurence, aussi dans toi?
Est-ce qu'un poids secret t'opprime ainsi que moi?"

Hardly an old play but has its ready instance of the moody mood, in all varieties of that mood. As in Dr. Moore's *Foundling*, where Rosetta rallies Belmont. "What, musing, brother? Now would I fain know which, of all the virtues, has been the subject of your contemplations" Or in Garrick's *Bon Ton*, where the Colonel approaches the heroine with a venturesome hope that he, her humble servant, has had some share in her last reverie. Or in Home's *Douglas*, where Glenalvon breaks in upon Lady Randolph's Anna with the query direct,—

"What dost thou muse on, meditating maid?
Like some entranced and visionary seer,
On earth thou stand'st, thy thoughts ascend to heaven."

But after such a surfeit of fiction—dramatic, narrative, lyrical, or what not—it may be a relief to secure one illustra-

tion from real life, of the sort of question—if not the sort of answer—that in real life is so common. One of the admired *mots* of the late Sir George Rose was on the occasion of his meeting his old friend, the Master of the Temple, Archdeacon Robinson, apparently deep in thought, in the neighbourhood of that venerable foundation, and asking him playfully, “Well, Master, and what are you dreaming about?” “Oh,” said the Archdeacon, in Horatian phrase, “I was *nescio quid meditans nugarum*.” “But then with you, dear friend,” the other rejoined, “it is always in the *Via Sacra*.”*

§ IV

COUNTERFEIT COMBAT, AND SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS

King Lear, Act II, Sc. I.

EDMUND sticks at nothing to make up a case against Edgar, and to delude their father. Pretending to hear Gloucester coming, he prompts Edgar to draw his sword as if to defend himself from attack; and a counterfeit combat is got up on the spur of the moment, and at a moment's notice,—Edgar all bewildered at what it can all mean; Edmund all duplicity, and design to make it seem to mean parricide and fratricide too.

“*Edm.* I hear my father coming,—Pardon me ;
 In cunning, I must draw my sword upon you :
 Draw ; seem to defend yourself Now quit you well.
 Yield ;—come before my father ;—Light, ho, here !
 Fly, brother,—Torches ! torches !—So, farewell —
[*Exit* EDGAR.
 Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion
 Of my more fierce endeavour I have seen drunkards

* Another complimentary speech of Sir George's, to the same address, referred to a then current rumour that the Master of the Temple was about to be raised to the episcopal bench. “Well, if he must leave the Temple, I shall be glad to think it is to be by Mitre Court.”

Do more than this in sport.—Father! father!
Stop, stop!—No help?

Enter GLOSTER, and Servants with torches.

Glo. Now, Edmund, where's the villain?

Edm Look, sir, I bleed . . . When he by no means could
Persuade me to the murder of your lordship, . . .
Seeing how loathly opposite I stood
To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion
With his prepared sword he charges home
Mine unprovided body, lanced mine arm
But when he saw my best-alarum'd spirits
Bold in the quarrel's right, roused to the encounter,
Or whether 'ghasted by the noise I made,
Full suddenly he fled."

In the forged story made up against Milo, one Licinius, a killer of the victims for sacrifice, was brought forward, who, to make his tale more credible, showed a slight wound in his side, inflicted by himself, which he affirmed to have been given by the stroke of a gladiator in Milo's pay. Not a Mr. Hawkins, Q.C., nor a Serjeant Parry, could evince more contempt for an Arthur Orton, than Cicero expressed for the "butcher" to whom such credit was given, and for the gulls by whom "the wound in this man's side, which seemed to be the prick only of a needle, could be taken for the stroke of a gladiator."

Beaumarchais made up a telling story of that episode in his tumultuous life when he was beset by two robbers between Frankfort and Nuremberg, only effecting his escape after a sanguinary fray, in which he was grievously wounded in the hands, while nothing but the capsula containing the royal letter saved him from a blow aimed at his heart. But according to a damaging and detrimental eye-witness, what Beaumarchais did, upon that occasion, was to take his razor and a pocket-mirror with him from the coach, and return in half an hour with his hand wounded, and traces of blood on his person.

The reader may remember how careful Camilla is, in Cervantes' novelette of the "Curious Impertinent," to fix on

a safe spot for the dagger to enter her fair flesh, and not to let it go too deep ; and how, when Lothario saw her fall, as if fainting, to the ground, he ran up to her, breathless and terrified ; “but on perceiving the slightness of the wound, his fears vanished, and he admired the sagacity, prudence, and ingenuity of the fair Camilla”

Peisistratus shows himself wounded to the crowd in the market-place, and harangues them from his chariot, declaring that he has been attacked in a country excursion by the foes of himself and the popular party. “Son of Hippocrates,” he hears Solon addressing him, “you are but a bad imitator of Odysseus. he wounded himself to delude his enemies—you to deceive your countrymen.” Readers of Plutarch may remember too, in his *Life of Dion*, the story of Sosis displaying himself with a wounded head, which he said had been given him by Dion’s foreign soldiers, and which the surgeons said was traceable to no such cause—the wound being the effect, evidently, not of one incision, but of several mild and moderate ones, at different times, just as Sosis could with least inconvenience bear the pain. And witnesses were at hand who had seen Sosis running naked and bleeding, and who, on his telling them who had wounded him, hastened in pursuit of the assailants, but could meet with no such persons, “only they found a razor lying under a hollow stone near the place whence they had seen Sosis hurrying.” The Patriarch John the Grammarian, of Iconoclastic renown, is accused of the paltry artifice of opening a vein in the region of the stomach, and showing himself bleeding to the people—as though the Empress Theodora had attempted to assassinate him. But the fraud was “detected, exposed, acknowledged,” and the abashed Patriarch had to withdraw, unpitied and despised, to the suburbs. Then, again, one recalls the story of Zopyrus, more in earnest, mutilating himself without mercy, and telling the enemy, to win their confidence, that his master, Darius, had done it. So the hero of the *Odyssey*, in his “bold exploit in Troy,” as told by Menelaus to the hero’s son,—“Seam’d o’er with wounds, which his own sabre gave.” We may be reminded too, with a difference, of the crafty

exposition of Richard's arm, "like a blasted sapling, wither'd up," the alleged result of the witchcraft of Edward's wife, foully practised against her brother-in-law. Nor may be overlooked, in Shakspeare, Parolles proposing to give himself some hurts, and saying he got them in battle: "Yet slight ones will not carry it, they will say, 'Came you off with so little?' and great ones I dare not give." Nor, again, Falstaff and his associates tickling their noses with spear-grass, to make them bleed, and then beslubbering their garments with the gore, and swearing it was the blood of true men. Miladi, in *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, horrifies Felton by stabbing herself, but she does it so skilfully that the knife glides down the steel busk, tearing the robe, and penetrating slantingly between the flesh and the ribs. "If Blount despatch'd himself, he play'd the man," is a line of Pope's which refers to the stab in the arm given to himself by the author of the *Oracles of Reason*, "as pretending to kill himself," to work upon the feelings of the lady who rejected him, but he, at least, if it was a pretence (as Warburton asserts), cut too deep, and died, whether he meant it or not. The conspirators in *Devereux* agree, one to wound the other in the arm or breast, "in some place not dangerous to life," so as to give a colourable plausibility (the colour of blood) to their concocted tale.

These counterfeit enmities and sham fights, of one kind and another, are plenty as blackberries on the hedges of highway and byway literature. In Arbuthnot's *History of John Bull*, the signiora and Jack "railed at one another, only the better to hide an intrigue." The seeming disagreement of Justinian and Theodora was imputed by many to a secret and mischievous confederacy against the religion and happiness of their people.

"What seemeth nitre near the cannon's mouth ?

Cold, cold. What the charr'd wood ? Why, dull as death.

Yet,—married to each other, they will flame

Damnation through a land, and make it hell."

Rica tells Usbek, in the *Lettres Persanes*, "Souvent même nous vous raillerons, toi et moi, et l'on dira : Voyez comme ils

s'attaquent, comme ils se défendent; ils ne s'épargnent pas . . . voilà une véritable bataille." Said Mr Fonblanque of a ministerial squabble in 1828, "These Huskissons and Herrieses are obviously like shears, which 'ne'er cut themselves, but what's between them.' They sliced off the gentle pumpkin head of the Cabinet in the twinkling of an eye by coming together, but remain, after the mischief is done, screwed to each other as fast as ever." He speaks of them as the "two hussies" who caused the explosion, now comfortably seated together, their caps readjusted, and all as smooth as treachery between them. And he even compares them to two fellows hustling each other in the streets, brawling, lugging off their coats, and setting-to, while a ring is formed—spectators have their pockets picked—and next minute the two combatants are sitting amicably in the same box in the flash-house, enjoying the plunder.

When Clodius began to sue for the tribunate, a report was industriously spread of a breach between him and Cæsar—which gave no small comfort to Cicero, all whose hopes of any good depended on the opposite party quarrelling among themselves. But the event quickly showed all the noise of this strife to have been mere artifice. "I wadna, an I were you, Captain," says Bailie Nicol Jarvie to the English officer, "rest my main dependence on the Hielandmen—hawks winna pike out hawks' een. They may quarrel amang themselves, and gie ilk ither ill names, and maybe a slash wi' a claymore, but they are sure to join in the lang run against a' civilized folk, that wear breeks on their hinder ends, and hae purses in their pouches." We are told by those who ought to know, that the opposition displayed to each other by Cheap Johns, or Street Hansellers, while pursuing their business, is mostly assumed, for the purpose of attracting a crowd. Galt's pawkie Provost and Mr. M'Lucre are strenuous, for their own advantage, in seeming to pull at opposite ends of the rope. "There was nothing that he proposed in the council but what I set myself against with such bir and vigour, that sometimes he could scarcely keep his temper, even while he was laughing in his sleeve to see how the other members of the corporation were

beglammered." Historians have little doubt that Sir Walter Raleigh's quarrel with the Lieutenant of the Tower was entirely contrived for the purpose which it answered, that of securing the notice of the Queen. Confined in the Tower for some offence, and understanding that the Queen was about to pass to Greenwich in her barge, Raleigh insisted on approaching the window, that he might see, at whatever distance, that paragon of royal beauty. The Lieutenant of the Tower (his own particular friend) threw himself between his prisoner and the window; while Sir Walter, apparently influenced, as another Sir Walter tells the story, by a fit of unrestrainable passion, swore he would not be debarred from seeing his light, his life, his goddess! A scuffle ensued, "got up" for effect's sake, in which the Lieutenant and his captive grappled and struggled with fury—tore each other's hair,—and at length drew daggers, and were only separated by force. The exhibition was found to pay.

After such sort, on Juan's showing, do he and the Duke Medina fight in Beaumont and Fletcher :

"*Leon.* Afore me,

'Tis rarely counterfeited.

Juan.

True, it is so, sir.

He is not hurt, only we made a scuffle,

As though we purposed anger that same scratch

On's hand, he took, to colour all, and draw compassion "

§ V.

GLOSTER'S EYES PLUCKED OUT.

King Lear, Act III., Sc. 7.

SUCH a tragedy as *King Lear* could well afford a good riddance of such a scene as the plucking out of Gloster's eyes, gouged, scooped out, thrown on the ground, and stamped upon by a Duke of Cornwall, *coram populo*. Regan's motion that Gloster, as soon as taken, be on the instant hanged,

is followed on the instant by Goncril's amendment, "Pluck out his eyes,"—an amendment, however, which need not cancel the previous question,—any more than, once upon a time, drawing first need interfere with being hanged and quartered afterwards.

Cornwall bids his "fellows, hold the chair" with Gloster in it, and forthwith proceeds to business—the plucking out, and the stamping "Out, vile jelly! Where is thy lustre now?" Gladly one overpasses the interval from that ghastliest of sensation scenes to the hour when Edgar, in a madman's rags, assuming a semblance the very dogs disdained, met his

"father with his bleeding rings,
Their precious stones now lost; became his guide,
Led him, begg'd for him, saved him from despair."

Nor did Edgar reveal himself to that blinded sire until his challenge of Edmund in single combat was given and accepted. Then, being armed, Edgar asked Gloster's blessing—not as yet sure, though hopeful of the good success he was to achieve—and from first to last told him his pilgrimage. Gloster lived but to hear that, and there an end *Tempus est abire*. Like Lear's, his was a happy release, and none too soon:

"But his flaw'd heart,
(Alack! too weak the conflict to support)
'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
Burst smilingly."

So *exeat* GLOSTER, *necnon requiescat in pace*

Just as attractively effective and impressive as this gouging scene in *Lear* is the reverse, is the scene in *King John* where Hubert prepares with hot irons to put out young Arthur's eyes, and is won over to protest he would not touch those eyes for all the treasures of his uncle John, though to that uncle he was sworn, and did purpose too, with those same very irons to burn them out. Ulrici indeed discerns a deep purpose in the Gloster gouging scene. he holds that the earl's sensual and ill-governed life in his youth was punished by the loss, in unrepentant age, of his wanton eyes, and that

it was only when all was dark without that he was brought to a knowledge of himself. But if this had seriously been Shakspeare's purpose, would he not have brought it out a little more clearly?

A monstrous chapter might be made up of emptied eye-sockets. It would include, for instance, not to go far back into antiquity, the fate of Constantine VI., whom, as he slept, Irene's emissaries stabbed in the eyes, with "such violence and precipitation" as if they meant to execute a mortal sentence. And rumour had it that death was the immediate consequence. But the blinded son of Irene is known to have survived the blinding many years, oppressed by the court and forgotten by the world.

"That night,
In league with Hell, ere morning streak'd the skies,
Left all its darkness in the misused eyes
Of Constantine the Porphyrogenete .
—The shadow of a shadow, forced to fleet
Out of the glare that gave him in men's sight
The semblance of a substance once

"That night,
Irene, ere the Porphyry Chamber (pale
With strife wherein to triumph is to fail)
She left triumphant, glancing back,—her glance
Fell casual on the conscious countenance
Of that white Christ upon the black cross spread,
Whose eyes, into the now close-curtain'd bed
Erewhile down-gazing, had beheld why those
Tight draperies round it had been twitch'd so close.
And lo ! where late those witnesses had been,
Instead of eyes, two gory sockets, seen
Thro' the red firelight, stopp'd her, stagger'd her."

The legend, writ large, may it not be read in the book of Chronicles and Characters ?

Charles le Gros deprived Hugues of his eyes. Carloman, the turbulent and troublesome fourth son of Charles le Chauve, was at last punished by the same infliction, and did not long survive it. The terrible Justinian II. inflicted the same loss on Felix, Archbishop of Ravenna. Similar, and worse, was the fate of the Patriarch Anastasius, at the hands

of Constantine Copronymus, who also blinded his rival and brother-in-law Artavasdus, in reference to which last occurrence the historian of *Latin Christianity* observes, "It is difficult to decide whether the practice of blinding, instead of putting to death, in such cases, was a concession to Christian humanity." It was at any rate practised wholesale in those days. The cruelties in Rome perpetrated under Pope Stephen III include the blinding of the Bishop Theodorus, and of Passianus, the brother of the usurping Pope, Philip; who was himself treated in the same inhuman manner, and left bleeding in the street. A presbyter, named Waldipert, who had taken a leading share in the revolution, had his eyes put out, and his tongue cut in so barbarous a manner that he died. Some of these might be the acts of a fierce, ungovernable, excited populace, but Dean Milman cannot acquit the clergy, in their collective and deliberative capacity, of as savage inhumanity. Nor did these tragic scenes close with the extinction of the faction of Constantine: "New victims suffered the dreadful punishment of blinding." Milman's pages, and Gibbon's, teem with nauseating iterations of the horror. Christopher and his son Sergius were "seized, blinded,"—the elder dying of the operation. Pope Leo III., riding on St. George's Day to the church of St. Lawrence, was attacked by a band of armed men, thrown from his horse, and (A.D. 799) "an awkward attempt was made to practise the Oriental punishment of mutilation, as yet rare in the West, to put out his eyes, and to cut out his tongue." Bernhard, king in Italy, was, on his defeat by Lewis the Pious, incapacitated for future acts of ambition by the loss of his eyes,—a punishment so cruelly or unskilfully executed that he died of exhaustion or a broken heart. The Emperor Basil I., who had the character of being an assiduous and impartial judge, desirous to save, but not afraid to strike, condemned his personal foes, whom it might be unsafe to pardon, "after the loss of their eyes," to a "life of solitude and repentance." The second Basil, born in the purple, the conqueror of the Bulgarians, "inflicted a cool and exquisite vengeance on fifteen thousand captives who had been guilty

of the defence of their country . they were deprived of sight ; but to one of each hundred a single eye was left, that he might conduct his blind century to the presence of their king " Their king is said to have expired of grief and horror at the sight. The story is no longer unconditionally received of our Henry I commanding a basin of iron made red-hot to be held before the eyes of his brother Robert,* these being kept open by force, until they were burned blind ; which atrocity the miserable prince is said to have survived for twenty-eight years. The fugitive ex-emperor Alexius Angelus, as soon as arrested, was deprived of his eyes. It was his brother's doing.

" The new-made Emperor beckon'd from the rout
Of smiling and of crawling creatures,—things
That do ill-make, and are ill-made by, kings,
Feeders of infamy, and fed by it,—
One that most smiled, and lowest crawl'd, to fit
His master's humour unto whom he said,
' Our Brother hath two eyes yet in his head,
Worth nothing now to him, worth much to me.
Get them away from him, and thou shalt be
The gainer by his loss '—This deed was done
They left him in the dark "

It is confessedly a calumny that imputes to the Emperor Manuel the perished vision of blind old Dandolo. In his account of the fate of John Lascaris, Gibbon tells how, by fear or conscience, Palæologus was restrained from dipping his hands in innocent and royal blood, while the anxiety of a usurper and a parent urged him to secure his throne, by " one of those imperfect crimes so familiar to the modern Greeks " The loss of sight incapacitated the young prince for the active

* The dread of such a fate at the hands of their father, William the Conqueror, is supposed to influence Harold, in the historical novel made attractive by his name. Harold, we read, could have smiled at the brief pangs of death, but stood appalled at the fear of blindness, blindness in the midst of a career so grand,—blindness in the midst of his pathway to a throne,—blindness, that curse which palsies the strong and enslaves the free, and leaves the whole man defenceless—defenceless in an Age of Iron.—*Cf* chapters iv. and v. of Book IX.

business of the world ; but instead of the brutal violence of tearing out his eyes, the visual nerve was destroyed (as in the alleged instance of Robert of Normandy) by the intense glare of a red-hot basin. This milder invention for extinguishing the sight is said—"a foolish story"—to have been tried by the philosopher Democritus on himself, when he sought to withdraw his mind from the visible world. Ducange takes occasion, at the word *abacinare*, to review the various modes of blinding. "The more violent were scooping, burning with an iron or hot vinegar, and binding the head with a strong cord till the eyes burst from their sockets." Mildness and unskilfulness in the operation are noticeable alternatives in a poor minority of instances, as in the case of Andronicus and John, son and grandson of the Emperor John Palæologus, of whom one retained the sight of an eye, and the other was afflicted only with the infirmity of squinting. This punishment was enforced at the behest of Amurath, with whose son Sauzes a plot had been formed by Andronicus against the authority and lives of their parents: Amurath deprived Sauzes of his sight, and menaced his vassal Palæologus with the treatment of an accomplice and an enemy, unless he inflicted a like punishment on his own son. Hunald, the son of Eudes, took vengeance on the brother Hatto who betrayed him—and to the feud between whom Michelet traces the origin of the future ills of Aquitaine—the rivalry of Poitiers and Toulouse—by having his eyes torn out ; and then, by way of expiation, Hunald immured himself in a monastery in the isle of Rhé. The same historian may well denounce as atrocious the treatment of Jean Bon, who for certain offences against the king's majesty (Lewis the Eleventh) suffered the loss of his eyes ; but it being reported afterwards that he could still see with one eye, two archers were commissioned to examine him, and "if they found that he retained his sight, to finish the poking out and destroying of his eyes." In Gibbon's *Antiquities of the House of Brunswick* is recorded a "bloody scene" which in Guicciardini's own time (A.D. 1505) had sullied the court of Ferrara, and might revive the memory of the Theban brothers ; jealousy was the motive that

prompted the Cardinal Hippolito to have the "beauteous eyes" of Don Julio put out—"those hated eyes, extinguished by the command, and in the presence, of an amorous priest, who viewed with delight the agonies of a brother" But here again it may be suspected that the work was slightly performed by the less savage executioners, since the skill of his physicians restored Don Julio to an imperfect sight

The most appalling monster of all the Persian dynasty seems to have been Agha Mohammed Khan, that "shrivelled diminutive eunuch" who blinded seven thousand inhabitants for aiding the escape of his rival Lootf, the last of the Zends, and afterwards tore out the eyes of Lootf with his own hands.

Mutilation so detestable is sorry stuff for poetry, at the best But poetry has made the best of it, now and then There is Schiller, for instance, piling up the agony of Melchthal: "Blind, did you say? Quite blind,—and both his eyes?

"Oh, the eye's light, of all the gifts of Heaven
The dearest, best! . . . To die is nothing,
But to have life, and not have sight, —oh, that
Is misery indeed! . . .
Nought but his staff to the old eyeless man,
Stripp'd of his all—even of the light of day,
The common blessing of the meanest wretch."

And, not to be tempted further afield, there is Southey's description in *Madoc*, borrowed from the *Pentarchia*, of Cynetha's fate, and related by a sightless sympathizer:

"At midnight he was seized, and to his eyes
The brazen plate was held. He cried aloud,
He look'd around for help, . . . he only saw
His Uncle's ministers, prepared to do
Their wicked work, who to the red-hot brass
Forced his poor eyes, and held the open lids,
Till the long agony consumed the sense,
And when their hold relax'd, it had been worth
The wealth of worlds if he could then have seen,
Dreadful to him and hideous as they were,
Their ruffian faces! . . . I am blind, young Prince,
And I can tell how sweet a thing it is
To see the blessed light."

§ VI

CORNWALL'S REMONSTRANT RETAINER

King Lear, Act III., Sc 7

THE plucking out of Gloster's eyes is too much for even them of Cornwall's household. The cry of the mutilated earl for help is not unheeded by one at least of the standers-by and lookers-on. Regan's fell husband, the fiery duke, is cried shame on by one shocked servitor.

- "*Serv.* Hold your hand, my lord.
I have served you ever since I was a child;
But better service have I never done you
Than now to bid you hold
- Regan.* How now, you dog?
- Serv.* If you did wear a beard upon your chin,
I'd shake it on this quarrel. What do you mean?
- Corn.* My villain!
- Serv.* Nay then, come on, and take the chance of anger."

Which Cornwall does, and meets his death; as his slayer meets his, immediately after, by a stab in the back from Regan.

Of her quoth another servant, soon as her back is turned, "If she live long, and, in the end, meet the old course of death, women will all turn monsters." Of her husband's fate, the messenger to Albany succinctly tells the tale.

- "A servant that he bred, thrill'd with remorse,
Opposed against the act, bending his sword
To his great master, who thereat enraged,
Flew on him, and amongst them fell'd him dead,
But not without that harmful stroke, which since
Hath pluck'd him after."

Pisanio, in *Cymbeline*, devoted as he is to his master, Leonatus, revolts from the horrible and horribly unjust commission to murder Imogen. "If it be so to do good service, never let me be counted serviceable. How look I, that I should seem to lack humanity, so much as this fact comes

to?" Pisanio is of higher standing than the servant in *Lear*, and of far higher are the remonstrant nobles who cry shame on King John in the matter of young Arthur—telling the king to his face, "It is apparent [evident] foul play, and 'tis shame that greatness should so grossly offer it. So thrive it in your game! and so farewell." Salisbury is the spokesman, and Pembroke echoes his indignant words, and follows him in his peremptory leave-taking. "They burn in indignation; I repent," the cowed monarch says to himself, after they and the rest are gone. When afterwards he despatches Falconbridge to win them back, "The king hath dispossest himself of us," is Salisbury's reply; "we will not line his thin bestained cloak with our pure honours, nor attend the foot that leaves the print of blood where'er it walks. return and tell him so." It is of a later king of England that one of Shakespeare's nobles affirms, that he lacks the very instruments of chastisement, so that his power, like a fangless lion, may offer, but not hold. Prospero's slave, Ariel, had sometime been servant to Sycorax, but was a spirit too delicate to act her earthy and abhorred commands, "refusing her grand hests," and for that refusal pent into a cloven pine.

When the gallant young Conradin, Manfred's nephew, was taken in flight, and by Charles of Anjou brought to a mock trial, and of course condemned to death, even Charles's friends were indignant at so infamous a sentence, and Robert of Flanders struck the judge, while in the very act of pronouncing it, a blow that proved mortal. Eccelino III., of Romano, summoned by the Pope to arrest his father, was not, in Sismondi's words, "sufficiently depraved for such a crime" as that, albeit he notoriously knew not virtue, pity, or remorse. Frederick II., in 1247, was only prevented from hanging the hostages given before the revolt of Parma, by some of his militia, who declared it was with the sword of Ghibeline soldiers only, and not with that of the executioner, that they would secure the throne of the kaiser. Pope Urban VI. appointed his inquisitors to "examine" the six Cardinals of his creation, whom, for freedom of opinion, he had seized and cast into a

close and fœtid dungeon, an old tank or cistern, loading them with chains: "The inquisitors," says Milman, "returned to the Pope; two of them burst into tears. Urban sternly taunted their womanish weakness" Theodoric venturing to remonstrate, and to urge the Pope to mercy, Urban became only more furious, his face reddening like a lamp, his voice choked with passion. That was an age when, as an Italian historian instructs us, whoever kept servants, demanded above all that they should be brave, and that they should wear arms for the execution of any sanguinary order in case of need. "It was because murders were generally committed by them, that domestic service did not degrade,"—persons well-born placing their children with nobles, as pages, footmen, and grooms, because they carried a sword, and their service being in effect ennobled by the chance of spilling blood. An age that could have made nothing whatever of *Captain Sword and Captain Pen*, especially of such an episode in it as this:

"'But how! what now?' cried Captain Sword,
 'Not a blow for your gen'ral? not even a word?
 What! traitors? deserters?'
 'Ah no!' cried they;
 But the game's at an end; the 'wise won't play'
 'And where's your old spirit?'
 'The same, though another,
 Man may be strong without maiming his brother'"

Barère's murderous decree against the English became a dead letter, because it was to be executed by men very different from those who were the instruments of the Committee of Public Safety. The warriors who, under Hoche, as Macaulay describes them, had guarded the walls of Dunkirk, and who, under Kleber, had made good the defence of the wood of Monceaux, shrank with horror from an office more degrading than that of the hangman. "The Convention," said an officer to his men, "has sent orders that all the English prisoners shall be shot." "We will not shoot them," answered a stout-hearted sergeant. "Send them to the Convention. If the deputies take pleasure in killing a prisoner,

they may kill him themselves, and eat him too, like savages as they are." Buonaparte himself, with all his *acharnement* of hatred to England, always spoke of Barère's decree with loathing, and exulted that the soldiery had refused to obey the Convention.

In the Polish massacre of April 8, 1861, one officer, who received orders to take part in this wholesale barbarity, is said to have flatly refused; he preferred to die, and anticipated the certain sentence of a court-martial by killing himself.

There is nothing, Chesterfield says, so strongly inculcated in monarchies, by the laws, by religion, and honour, as submissive obedience to the prince's will, but this very honour tells us that the prince ought never to command a dishonourable action, because this would render us incapable of serving him. "Crillon refused to assassinate the Duke of Guise, but offered to fight him. After the massacre of St Bartholomew, Charles IX. having sent orders to the governors in the several provinces for the Huguenots to be murdered, Viscount Dort, who commanded at Bayonne, wrote thus to the king: 'Sire, among the inhabitants of this town, and your majesty's troops, I could not find so much as one executioner; they are honest citizens and brave soldiers. We jointly, therefore, beseech your majesty to command our arms and lives in things that are practicable'" So with homelier folk. Mr. Hatchway, in *Peregrine Pickle*, no sooner learnt the sentiments of Mrs. Trunnion, than, sheathing his indignation, he told the commodore he should always be ready to execute his lawful commands; but that he could not in conscience be concerned in oppressing poor people who had been guilty of no offence. The butler in the *Vicar of Wakefield* is interrupted by Thornhill's exclamation, "How! this to my face?" "Yes," replied the butler, "or to any man's face. To tell you a truth, Master Thornhill, I never either loved or liked you, and I don't care if I tell you now a piece of my mind." Even Sganarelle can turn upon Don Juan so far as to say, "Il faut que je décharge mon cœur, et qu'en valet fidèle je vous dise ce que je dois." Molière shall give us another bit of speaking

out in humble life: "Où est ce que nous sommes?" cries Argan, "et quelle audace est ce là, à une coquaine de servante, de parler de la sorte devant son maître?" Toinette's reply is as rough as ready: "Quand un maître ne songe pas à ce qu'il fait, une servante bien sensée est en droit de le redresser."

One is repulsively reminded of the revolting scene of Gloster's mutilation by the story of Sylla's treatment of one of the Marian party, who also, worse luck, was a Marius by name. This was M. Marius Gratidianus, a nephew of the old hero by adoption, whom Catiline seized, in hope of winning the conqueror's favour. Nor did Catiline reckon without his host. By Sylla's order the unoffending prisoner was carried to the tomb of Catulus, and there his eyes were plucked out, limb severed from limb, and death delayed with atrocious ingenuity. A senator, who fainted at the cruel sight, was slain upon the spot for showing sympathy with a Marius.

Benvenuto Cellini is careful to record the name and the merits of that Benedetto da Cagli who refused pointblank to pronounce sentence, and execute it, upon this distinguished prisoner. "Nothing," the official protested to the authorities, "shall ever prevail on me to comply with such orders;" and having thus delivered his sentiments, or, in homelier phrase, given them a bit of his mind, he departed with the greatest demonstrations of sorrow and concern.

It is told in Macaulay how one of Captain Kidd's crew turned recalcitrant, and was called a dog by the captain, which provoked him into exclaiming, in an agony of remorse, "Yes, I am a dog; but it is you that have made me so." Kidd, in a fury, struck the man dead.

Those who delight to call the Duke of Cumberland butcher, in remembrance of Culloden, make the most, that is to say the worst, of the anecdote of his coming on a young Highland officer, Charles Fraser, resting on his elbow, and staring at the royal party as they rode over the field. Duke William asked him to whom he belonged, and received for answer "To the Prince." His royal highness is said to have instantly

called to an officer to shoot "that insolent scoundrel" The officer, Major Wolfe, declined the task, saying that his commission was at his commander's disposal, but he could never consent to become an executioner The duke asked several other officers in succession to "pistol" the wounded man, but with the like result. They revolted from what was too revolting

The afflictions suffered by long-suffering Pamela at the hands of barbarous Mistress Jewkes, rouse even Colbrand to remonstrance, and move Robin the coachman to sobs Anon the persecuted damsel learns from that "inhuman tigress" herself how "Mr Longman, and Mr Jonathan the butler," have got into trouble by speaking up for the sufferer, and speaking out against the tyranny, and that "Mrs Jarvis, too, is in danger"—In *Caleb Williams* may be read how Barnes, who had for several years been the instrument of Mr. Tyrell's injustice, and whose mind was so hardened by use, that he could, without remorse, carry out his barbarous behests, was yet startled by the commission his master gave him against Emily Melville, and cried shame upon it as plainly as he could. And the following chapter tells how "the very attendants upon this house of oppression expressed their astonishment and disgust at Mr. Tyrell's unparalleled cruelty." In Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, Rudenz, who has stood so much in the service of Gessler, cannot stand the apple-shooting scene, (any more than historical criticism can,)—

"I have been dumb

To all the oppressions I was doom'd to see, . . .

But to be silent longer were to be

A traitor to my king and country both "

Charles of Burgundy's injunctions against the Countess of Crèvecœur, in *Quentin Durward*, excite a general murmur of remonstrance: "My lord duke," exclaims the spokesman of the remonstrants, "this must be better thought on We your faithful vassals cannot suffer such a dishonour to the nobility and chivalry of Burgundy" In another chapter, William de la Marck's fell design against Quentin is checked

by dread of his own retainers: "Glancing his eye around, he read something in the looks of his soldiers which even *he* was obliged to respect" De la Marck saw, in short, that he would not be supported, even by his own band, in any further act of immediate violence—And once again from Sir Walter: Sir John Ramorny, in the *Fair Maid of Perth*, finds his least scrupulous and most serviceable subordinates in rascality fail him at last We see Evart and his companion Buncle approach him with sullen resolution in their faces, like men who have made up their minds to resist the authority they have so long obeyed. "How—my own squires control me?" exclaims Ramorny But there is murder in the wind, and they who have too long obeyed Sir John, now draw bridle.

§ VII

SYMPATHY LEARNT IN SUFFERING

King Lear, Act iv, Sc. 6.

EDGAR, offering kindly, as a stranger, a helping hand to his now sightless and unsuspecting father, is questioned in return, "Now, good sir, what are you?" And he replies,—

"A most poor man, made tame by fortune's blows,
Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,
Am pregnant to good pity."

Therefore let Gloster give the seeming stranger his hand, trusting it as to one that in suffering has learnt sympathy, and who will lead him to some biding Hearty thanks are Gloster's rejoinder, and a prayer for the bounty and benison of heaven on his guide.

He that hath suffered through heavy trials is able to succour them that are heavily tried. He is touched with a feeling of the infirmities that now he sees in others, and that once were so feelingly his very own. Suffering should be a high school for learning sympathy. "Thou shalt not oppress a

stranger," the Hebrew law enjoined; "for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" But, as Chateaubriand remarks in his *Memoirs*, referring to the instance of his father, who, from long trials, had acquired a sternness of character which he retained through life, the *Haud ignara mali miseris succurrere disco* is not always true: "Misfortune has its hardening as well as its tender effects" Of Gallus, the brother of Julian, we read in Gibbon, that a temper naturally morose and violent, instead of being corrected, was soured by adversity, "the remembrance of what he had suffered disposed him to retaliation rather than sympathy" Turner's biographer tell us of him, in his prosperous time, that the painter, who had never had quarter given to him when he was struggling, now, in his turn, gave no quarter; and adds, "Trial and difficulty harden nine hearts to stone for one they soften" This is a hard saying; or at least one would fain think it so. "Si le ciel t'éprouve aujourd'hui," urges the counsellor of patience in *Atala*, "c'est seulement pour te rendre plus compatissant aux maux des autres Le cœur, O Chactas! est comme ces sortes d'arbres qui ne donnent leur baume pour les blessures des hommes que lorsque le fer les a blessés eux-mêmes" Sir Fowell Buxton once maintained in Parliament the superior mercy of the poor to the poor, and gave as the obvious reason the poor man's discipline in the school of affliction "He knows what it is to want bread, and this has opened his heart and enlivened his affections for those who are exposed to the rigour of the season and the craving importunities of hunger; but the rich man cannot feel this." Mr Carlyle observes of Heyne, that, callous as the man seems to us, he had a merciful sympathy for his fellow-men; his own early distresses never left his memory; and for similar distresses his pity and help were, at all times, in store. Goethe's Iphigenia in Tauris vindicates to Thoas her sympathy with the doomed strangers, as having herself passed through the same furnace of fiery trial:

"Doth not remembrance of a common doom,
To soft compassion melt the hardest heart?
How much more mine! in them I see myself"

The opinion of the Zetlanders, that to save a drowning man was to run the risk of future injury from him—a superstition which induced these islanders, otherwise so hospitable, generous, and disinterested, to refuse their aid in those mortal emergencies which were so common upon their rocky and stormy coasts, moved Sir Walter Scott to the reflection, how strange it is that the minds of men should ever have been hardened towards those involved in a distress to which they themselves were so constantly exposed; but, he conjectured, “perhaps the frequent sight and consciousness of such danger tends to blunt the feelings to its consequences, whether affecting ourselves or others.” Adversity may teach what pain is, without teaching pity.

“Bound in thy adamant chain,
The proud are taught to taste of pain,
And purple tyrants vainly groan
With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone”

But it may leave them as it found them, or harder still. There are some trials, it has been said, which directly tend to embitter a man's feelings against his fellows, and so to produce a hard and cynical temper, but even these will be turned to an opposite account by the nobler natures, though the effort is at first a severe one. Experience is cited to prove that lofty moral altitudes are seldom, if ever, reached without trial: it is only those who are not unacquainted with trial themselves who can truly say, *miseris succerrere disco*. And that is explained to be precisely because endurance of trials, if they are patiently and bravely borne, not only braces the moral nerves, so to speak, but adds a depth and tenderness to the whole character. “Coarse natures, unless they are hardened by suffering, are sure to be softened by it, and refined natures gain in strength and power of active sympathy without losing anything of their refinement.” An eloquent special pleader in behalf of Old Ladies, to whom as a class the world is notoriously unjust, makes his plea more special in favour of such among them as, having suffered much, have been neither hardened nor soured by their sorrows—rather have been made more sympathetic with the sorrows of others,

and pitiful for all the young : they have lived through and lived down all their own trials, and have come out into peace on the other side, but they remember the heat and burden of the fiery passage, and they feel for those who have still to bear the pressure of the pain they have overcome.

An example from familiar history, and one from familiar fiction, may be recalled before closing this section of illustrations of Edgar's text. Macaulay tells us of Spencer Cowper, the grandfather of the poet, in reference to the trial from which he escaped with life and honour in 1699, that he afterwards rose to high eminence in his profession, at length took his seat, with general applause, on the judicial bench, and there distinguished himself by the "humanity which he never failed to show to unhappy men who stood, as he had once stood, at the bar" Smollett's Welsh surgeon, Mr. Morgan, is our other representative man. "As for a shentleman in distress," said he, shaking the unfortunate Roderick Random by the hand, "I lofe him as I lofe my own powels ; for Got help me ! I have had vexations enough upon my own pack " The honest Celt was but expressing in his homely way the doctrine enforced in Spenser :

"Wee mortall wights, whose lives and fortunes bee
To commun accidents stil open layd,
Are bownd with commun bond of frailtee,
To succor wretched wights whom we captivèd see "

§ VIII.

THE GLOSTERS ON SHAKSPEARE'S CLIFF

King Lear, Act iv., Sc. 6

IT is to a blind man, his father, that Edgar, still in disguise, though no longer either in garb or dialect as Poor Tom, gives that description of a Dover cliff which, admired by all, is by some objected to as transcending by far any altitude the

Kentish coast can show. But Edgar may be purposely exaggerating, even as he is purposely misleading the old man bent on suicide. Edgar would make him believe they are toiling up the steepest of ascents, while Gloster is convinced that the ground is even. "Horrible steep! Hark, do you hear the sea?" asks the son. "No, truly," replies the sire. Presently Edgar resumes,—claiming to have brought the eyeless wanderer to the spot he had named,—a cliff, namely, whose high and bending head looks fearfully in the confined deep. "Bring me but to the very brim of it," had Gloster told his seeming peasant guide, and "from that place I shall no leading need." And now, on the guide's showing, they are there—but he is careful that Gloster shall *not* be on the brink of any precipice, and that when fling himself he does, it shall be no fall from a cliff, but on level ground :

"Come on, sir, here's the place —stand still.—How fearful
And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles Half way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire ;* dreadful trade!
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head.
The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,
Appear like mice; and yon tall anchoring bark,
Dimmish'd to a cock; her cock, a buoy
Almost too small for sight, the murmuring surge
That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high —I'll look no more,
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong."

Then Gloster is assured that he is standing within a foot of the extreme verge; the guide protesting that, for his part, he would not there leap upright for all beneath the moon. Then the guide is dismissed, and Gloster leaps, and falls—on the level ground. Edgar is at hand, to play out his part, which

* O'Keeffe has this mention of Hanbury Hill, in a record of his tour in that neighbourhood in 1791. "I never till now discovered Shakspeare's meaning in the line, 'Half way down hangs one who gathers samphire.' I always thought the '*hangs*' was a man clambering the cliff, but here we saw one actually employed in this 'dreadful trade,' suspended by a rope tied round his middle, there indeed he literally hung"

is now that of a scared spectator on the beach below, all amazement at the fall from the height above, and persuading Gloster that he *has* fallen from the summit of that chalky bourn. "Ten masts at each make not the altitude which thou hast perpendicularly fell," and yet escaped with life. The calculation of the ten masts may go some way to qualify what is poetically transcendental in the description; but let that pass.

Johnson found fault with the poetry of the description, as such. It should be all precipice, he maintained, all vacuum: the crows impede your fall the diminished appearance of the boat, and other circumstances, are "all very good description, but do not impress the mind at once with the horrible idea of immense height. The impression is divided, you pass on by computation, from one stage of the tremendous space to another" Addison, however, in the *Tatler*, pronounces the prospect "from Dover Cliff in Shakspeare" to be drawn with such proper incidents, that whoever can read it without growing giddy, must have a good head, or a very bad one.

Mr. Pepys was in company on that beach in 1660—and, save the mark! it was on the memorable 29th of May of that memorable year—when, as he journalizes the fact, "at last we came upon a very high cliff by the seaside, and rode under it, we having laid great wagers, I and Dr. Mathews, that it was not so high as Paul's, my Lord and Mr. Hetly, that it was. But we riding under it, my Lord made a pretty good measure of it with two sticks, and found it to be not above thirty-five yards high, and Paul's is reckoned to be about ninety." Pepys was no devotee to Shakspeare, and he makes no reference to the scene in *Lear*. His friend John Evelyn had better taste and wider reading, but though his description of Mount Vesuvius in 1645 contains one sentence about "a perpendicular hollow cliffe (like that from the highest part of Dover Castle)," there is no hint of familiarity with Shakspeare's, which is not part of the Castle, Cliff. Nearly ten years later we find Evelyn in and about Bath, and journalizing this impression of imposing altitude: "But what was most stupendous to me was the rock of St Vincent a little distance from the towne, the precipice whereoff is

equal to anything of that nature I have seen in the most confragose cataracts of the Alpes." As with the sensational scene of the smuggler's leap, in the Ingoldsby Legends,—

"It's enough to make one's flesh to creep
To stand on that fearful verge, and peep
Down the rugged sides so dreadfully steep"

The cliff to which Shakspeare gave his immortal name, is "as all the world knows," wrote Sir Walter Scott, on a visit to Dover in 1826, a great deal lower than his description implies, and "our Dover friends, justly jealous of the reputation of their cliff, impute this diminution of its consequence to its having fallen in repeatedly since the poet's time" But Sir Walter thought it likely that the imagination of Shakspeare, writing perhaps at a period long after he may have seen the rock, had described it such as he conceived it to have been. Besides, Shakspeare was born in a flat country, and Dover Cliff is at least lofty enough to have suggested the exaggerated features to his fancy. "At all events, it has maintained its reputation better than the Tarpeian Rock—no man could leap from it and live" Our ideas of greatness are of a relative nature, observes Gibbon, when describing the width of the Hellespont,—a sea contracted within such narrow limits seeming but ill to deserve the epithet of broad, frequently bestowed upon it by Homer, who, Gibbon goes on to surmise, insensibly lost the remembrance of the sea, as he pursued the windings of the stream, and contemplated the rural scenery which appeared on every side to terminate the prospect; and thus, the sea itself forgotten, his fancy painted those celebrated straits with all the attributes of a mighty river flowing with a swift current, and at length, through a wide mouth, discharging itself into the *Ægean* or *Archipelago*.

Whether Shakspeare ever did see Dover, is matter of pure conjecture. He may have drawn as entirely and exclusively on imagination for his picture of the prospect, as he did in the warning to Hamlet at Elsinore not to be tempted by the Ghost to the

"dreadful summit of the cliff
That beetles o'er his base into the sea . . .

The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain
That looks so many fathoms to the sea,
And hears it roar beneath,"—

there being, in point of fact, no cliffs at all at Elsinore, and not one dizzy precipice to be found in the whole of Seeland

In one of his letters from the Isle of Wight, Francis Horner describes the cliffs on the south coast, in many places, as very grand—seeming all one uniform stratum of chalk, and rising to the perpendicular height of from three to six hundred feet above the sea. "Here Shakspeare's description," he adds, "was tritely appropriated, even the circumstances of the choughs and samphire-gatherer were not wanting" The latter, a dreadful tradesman, has his fellow in Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, in the person of "a poor wild-hay-man of the Rigi-berg, who on the brow of the abyss mows down the grass from steep and craggy shelves, to which the very cattle dare not climb." Humboldt remarks of Shakspeare, somewhere in his *Kosmos*, that the master-poet who amid the pressure of his animated action has scarcely ever time to introduce deliberate descriptions of natural scenery, does yet so paint them by occurrences, allusions, etc, that we seem to see them before our eyes, and to live in them. "His Dover cliff in *Lear* actually turns one giddy." We are more affected, says Goldsmith, by reading Shakspeare's description of Dover cliff than we should be were we actually placed on the summit, for, in reading the description, we refer to our own experience, and perceive with surprise the justness of the imitation. But if it be so close as to be mistaken for nature, the pleasure then will cease, because the *μίμησις*, or imitation, no longer appears. In another of his works, Goldsmith describes with some elaboration the rocks of St. Kilda, with frightful precipices which the crow and the chough avoid,—these birds choosing smaller heights, where they are less exposed to the tempest; it is the cormorant, the gannet, the tarrock, and the terne, that venture to these dreadful retreats, and claim an undisturbed possession "To the spectator from above, those birds, though some of them are above the

size of an eagle, seem scarce as large as a swallow, and their loudest screaming is scarcely perceptible" The "big trees" of the Yosemite valley are thus glanced at in Mr. Coffin's picturesque book: "Suddenly we find ourselves on the brink of an awful chasm . . . Hang over the chasm, if your nerves are steady enough, and look into its depths. Those little green points, like plants just springing from a garden-bed, are gigantic forest-trees. That foliage of brighter hue, no larger than a tuft of grass, is an oak, which has withstood the storms of centuries. That thread of silver through the valley is a river, which has poured its flood down a precipice twenty-seven hundred feet" Dickens, looking down from the Plains of Abraham on the beautiful St. Lawrence sparkling and flashing in the sunlight, described the tiny ships below the rock from which he gazed, "whose distant rigging looks like spiders' webs against the light, while casks and barrels on their decks dwindle into toys, and busy mariners become so many puppets" Firmilian offers us a grotesque parallel, in the scene with Haverillo on the summit of the pillar of St. Simeon Stylites:

"A moment —Do you see
Yon melon-vendor's stall down i' the square?
Methinks the fruit that, close beside the eye,
Would show as largely as a giant's head,
Is dwindled to a heap of gooseberries!
If Justice held no bigger scales than those
Yon pigmy seems to balance in his hands,
Her utmost fiat scarce would weigh a drachm.
How say you?"

Haverillo Nothing,—'tis a fearful height."

Sir William Jones once planned an epic poem, to be called "Britain Discovered," with this for grand finale. Ramiel conducts the king and queen of Britain to the top of a high mountain, since called Dover Cliff, whence he shows them the extent of their empire, points to its different rivers, forests, and plains. Had Sir William ever seen Shakspeare's Cliff, when he designed this panoramic survey; or was his notion of the height and the view derived from Shakspeare only? "Shakspeare never saw a hill higher than Malvern beacon,"

Mr. Kingsley stoutly avers, in his *Chalk-stream Studies* Dr Chalmers wrote home from the Kentish coast, "In this direction we were shown Shakspeare's Cliff, described by him certainly with poetic exaggeration. He probably never saw Dover; and in point of loftiness the cliffs certainly do come short of that which might have been anticipated from the picture of them in Lear's Tragedy. Still they are most impressive." An anonymous essayist in *Blackwood* impatiently rebukes those who accuse the description of gross exaggeration, just as if the speaker were supposed to be standing on the brink of the precipice, and giving a true and particular account of what was under his nose, whereas, in fact, the cliffs are several miles distant, and Edgar is so far from intending to give a just graphic account of them, that he is not even uttering his own emotions at the imagination of a possible profound, such as we often dream of in childhood. The speech, it is contended, is artfully contrived to work on the terrors of the blind Gloster, and to scare him from purposed suicide:—its exaggeration and extravagance are thus its merits and its justification.

CHAPTER VII.

Lear out in the Storm.

§ I.

LEAR'S DEFIANCE OF WIND AND HAIL

King Lear, Act III., Sc. 2.

RUDELY, ruthlessly as they treat him—rain, wind, thunder, fire, in unison—Lear taxes not the elements with unkindness, for he never gave *them* kingdom, nor called *them* children: they owe him no allegiance, so are they free to let fall on him their horrible pleasure: here he stands, their slave—a poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man. Yet will he call them servile ministers, that have with Goneril and Regan joined against a head so old and white as his. Well, let them do their worst. He hurls them back, as it were, a defiant welcome.

“Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
You cataracts, and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o' the world!

* * * * *
Rumble thy belly full! Spit, fire! Spout, rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters.”

Thus see and hear we Lear contending with the fretful elements; bidding the wind blow the earth into the sea, or swell the curled waters above the main, that things might change, or cease, tearing the while his white hair, which the impetu-

ous blasts, with eyeless rage, catch in their fury and make nothing of, and striving in his little world of man to outscorn the to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.

"This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch,
The lion and the belly-pinched wolf
Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,
And bids what will take all "

Wordsworth pictures his Solitary among the mountains, "reckless of the storm that keeps the raven quiet in her nest," as he exclaims aloud, with articulate voice, amid the deafening tumult scarcely heard by him who utters it,—

"Rage on, ye elements ! let moon and stars
Their aspects lend, and mingle in their turn
With this commotion, ruinous though it be,
From day to night, from night to day, prolonged !"

In an earlier book of the *Excursion* we have the same unhappy recluse indulging in the same strain :

"Blow, winds of autumn !—let your chilling breath
Take the live herbage from the mead, and strip
The shady forest of its green attire,—
And let the bursting clouds to fury rouse
The gentle brooks !—Your desolating sway
Sheds," he exclaim'd, "no sadness upon me,
And no disorder in your rage I find "

Burns in his *Winter Night* is bitter as the Solitary of the hills :

"Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust !
And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost !
Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows !
Not all your rage, as now united, shows
More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
Vengeful malice unrepenting,
Than heaven-illumined man on brother man bestows !"

But that is a faded copy, in watery colours, of Shakspeare's "Blow, blow, thou winter wind, thou art not so unkind as man's ingratitude." Burns was fond of composing variations

on such a theme, however; as in the closing verse of one of his untitled songs:

"Come, Winter, with thine angry howl,
And raging bend the naked tree;
Thy gloom will soothe my cheerless soul,
When Nature all is sad to me!"

It is in another mood he depicts Tam O'Shanter's indifference to elemental strife. "Tam didna mind the storm a whistle," "Tam skelpit on through dub and mire, despising wind, and rain, and fire" The Cyclops in Euripides professes to laugh to scorn the thunderbolts of Zeus, and when rain pours down upon his cave, he bids it pour on, and when the Thracian wind brings down the snow, he kindles a fire and bids the snow whirl on. But the Cyclops is inside, and that makes all the difference. Tam is an outsider, yet not a whit less jovial than Polypheme.

Coleridge's ode on Dejection is that of an insider indeed, but one who craves counter-irritation from the fury of discordant elements without.

"And oh! that even now the gust were swelling,
And the slant night-shower driving loud and fast!
Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,
And sent my soul abroad,
Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,
Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live!"

For what he was now suffering from, was what he has so graphically defined to be—if at least the indefinite can be defined—a grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear, a stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief, which found no natural outlet, no relief, in word, or sigh, or tear.

De Montfort, in the tragedy known by his name, prepared to lift his hand and strike, as he lurks by moonlight in the wood, wishes, "Oh that a storm would rise, a raging storm!" for amidst the roar of warring elements he could better accomplish his fell design. The prisoner in *Ethwald* pooh-poohs his keeper's kindly thought as to stopping a rent in the old walls, through which the bleak wind visits him: "And let it

enter! it shall not be stopp'd. Who visits me besides the winds of heaven? Who mourns with me but the sad sighing wind?" In *Constantine Palæologus*, Valeria is fain, in her extremity, to "howl i' the desert with the midnight winds, and fearless be amidst all fearful things." Bereft of wife and children, Salathiel, now a self-divorced man, without a tie to bind him to transitory things, felt dreadfully secure from the fiercest rage of nature. He heard the thunder and the winds with gloomy satisfaction, and welcomed a sort of vague enjoyment in the effort to defy the last power of evil. After his interview with Houseman, Eugene Aram, we read, on his way home, "scarcely felt the rain, though the fierce wind drove it right against his path, he scarcely marked the lightning, though at times it seemed to dart its arrows on his very form. 'Let the storm without howl on,' thought he, 'that within hath a respite at last. Amidst the winds and rains I can breathe more freely than I have done on the smoothest summer-day.'" Jane Eyre tells us, "It was not without a certain wild pleasure I ran before the wind, delivering my trouble of mind to the measureless air-torrent thundering through space." Of a later, sadder, sterner experience she writes, that the night-wind swept over the hill and over her, as she lay hiding her face against the ground; the rain fell fast, drenching her to the skin: could she but have stiffened to the still frost, the friendly numbness of death, it might have pelted on, and welcome. So with the Wanderer, who loved well the tumult of the storm, as though his spirit had found in nature a trouble akin to its own fierce emotion.

"The hoarse night may howl herself silent for me!"

When the silence comes, then comes the howling within.

I am drenched to the knees in the surf of the sea,

And wet with the salt bitter rain to the skin."

Victor Hugo's Gilliatt is even aided by the terrific storm in his labour on the isolated rock; he plucks safety out of the catastrophe itself. "Human intelligence combating with brute force experiences an ironical joy in demonstrating the stupidity of its antagonist, and compelling it to serve the very

objects of its fury, and Gilliatt felt something of that immemorial desire to insult his invisible enemy, which is as old as the heroes of the *Iliad*." In one of the same author's plays the hero exclaims,

"Quand notre cœur se gonfle et s'emplit de tempêtes,
Qu'importe ce que peut un nuage des airs
Nous jeter en passant de tempête et d'éclairs!"

To Eugene Wrayburn, intent on a momentous errand, it made no difference that a heavy rush of hailstones cleared the streets, he crushed through them, leaving marks in the fast-melting slush that were mere shapeless holes; one might have fancied, following, that the very fashion of humanity had departed from his feet. It was a naughty night to swim in; but he must swim, or sink, if he could not stride, on and yet on.

Another reading of "Blow, winds," is of the kind exemplified in Crabbe's tale of Rachel, with her iterated invocation, "Turn tide, and breezes blow!"—"Blow wind, turn tide!"—and of how she came to "love the winds that sweep o'er the wild heath, and curl the restless deep." To detain, not to speed, the bark, is the aspiration, or suspiration, of the lover in A. H. Clough's *Mari Magno*:

"All night I hoped some dreadful wind would rise,
And lift the seas, and rend the very skies."

Not unlike to which frame of mind is that of Ladislav, in *Middlemarch*, when he and Dorothea stood silent, not looking at each other, but looking at the evergreens which were being tossed, and were showing the pale underside of their leaves against the blackening sky. "Will never enjoyed the prospect of a storm so much: it delivered him from the necessity of going away." Then we read how leaves and little branches were hurled about, and the thunder was getting nearer, and the light became more and more sombre, and a flash of lightning made them start and look at each other, and then smile.

Ricardo, in Beaumont and Fletcher's comedy of *The*

Coxcomb, invokes, or provokes, night and bitter coldness, and all the dews that hang upon night's locks,—“Showers, hails, snows, frosts, and two-edged winds that pine the maiden blossoms, I provoke you all, and dare expose this body to your sharpness, till I be made a landmark” Zanga opens the first scene of the first act of Young's tragedy of *The Revenge* with the self-assurance that

“horrors now are not displeasing to me
I like this rocking of the battlements
Rage on, ye winds, burst, clouds! and, waters, roar!
You bear a just resemblance of my fortune,
And suit the gloomy habit of my soul”

Brutus opens the third act of the tragedy which bears his name with the soliloquizing remark, quite in Zanga's vein, that slumber forsakes him, and he courts the horrors which night and tempest bring on every side: “Launch forth thy thunders, Capitolian Jove! Put fire into the languid souls of men; let loose thy ministers of wrath among them,” etc., etc. The Lake of Lucerne fisherman in Schiller, in despair at Tell's capture and Gessler's wantonness of power, rejects his boy's remonstrance that this is no weather to be out in, with the sonorous apostrophe,

“Rage on, ye winds! ye lightnings, flash your fires!
Burst, ye swollen clouds! Ye cataracts of heaven,
Descend, and drown the country! In the germ
Destroy the generations yet unborn!
Ye savage elements, be lords of all!”

Evidently the fisherman, or (which comes to the same thing, and avoids a hypothetical anachronism) his author, had been reading, and to some purpose, the heath scenes in *King Lear*. Haply Tobin was more or less consciously tracking those royal footsteps across the waste, when he set his Matilda on demanding of hoar-headed Philip, in the *Curfew*,

“What brings thee o'er the bitter-breathing heath,
Out of thy dwelling at this freezing hour?
The piercing air will not respect thine age,
Or do thy white hairs reverence.”

When Stephen Blackpool comes home late, and says he has been walking up and down, "But 'tis too bad a night for that," Rachael gently objects "the rain falls very fast, and the wind has risen" The wind! True. It was blowing hard. Hark to the thundering in the chimney, and the surging noise! To have been out in such a wind and not to have known it was blowing! But there are moods and tenses in human life when "Blow winds!" is an all too natural invocation, or invitation, or challenge; on the principle of Rousseau's assertion in *Les Rêveries*: "La douleur physique elle-même, au lieu d'augmenter mes peines, y ferait diversion En m'arrachant des cris, peut-être elle m'épargnerait des gémissements, et les déchirements de mon corps suspendraient ceux de mon cœur." Mrs Gaskell's desolate and deserted and despairing Ruth is described as throwing her body half out of window into the cold night air the wind was rising, and came in great gusts the rain beat down on her, it did her good; a still, calm night would not have soothed her as this did "The wild tattered clouds, hurrying past the moon, gave her a foolish kind of pleasure that almost made her smile a vacant smile. The blast-driven rain came on her again, and drenched her hair through and through The words 'stormy wind fulfilling His word' came into her mind"

There is a sketch, professedly from real life and personal experience, in one of *An Editor's Tales*, of a perplexed scribe, pressed for time and for "copy," and at his wits' ends for a subject, scouring through the town in bad weather, welcoming a thorough wetting, for he feels violent exercise to be needed, and then inspiration may come. As he tramps along in his thick boots and old hat, congratulating himself in having at last hit upon the right plan, the thick soft rain comes down, not with a splash and various currents, running off and leaving things washed though wet, but gently insinuating itself everywhere, and covering even the flags with mud He cares nothing for the mud. He goes through it with a happy scorn for the poor creatures he sees endeavouring to defend their clothes with umbrellas. "Let the heavens do their worst to me," he says to himself as he spins along with

eager steps—conscious of a feeling that external injuries can be of no moment, may he but cure the weakness that is within.

The ruined squire in *George Gerth*, who felt the rope about his neck,—to him "what did the rain signify? Let it rain. What did anything signify?" Outcast Janet Dempster, in George Eliot's story, found the very wind cruel, for it tried to push her back from the door she wanted to knock at and ask for pity, but how little, after all, mattered the gusts that drove against her, as she trod slowly with her naked feet on the rough pavement. As Caleb, in Miss Tytler's Huguenot fiction, rode along by the edge of the Waaste in stormy weather, he felt something of a wild man's savage satisfaction in the wind and wet, in the landscape which he loved being blurred and blotted out, because he was deadly sick at heart.

"Then whudder awa', thou bitter biting blast,
And sough thro' the scruntty tree,"

as the verse runs in the ballad of Robin-a-Ree. Exiled and indigent Sobieski, in Jane Porter's romance, is described as taking the bitter wind for his repast, and quenching his thirst with the rain that fell on his pale and feverish lip; while the cutting blast pierced him to the heart, without his taxing the elements with unkindness. "He had been too heavily assailed by the pitiless rigour of misfortunes, to regard the pelting of the elements." Hepzibah Pyncheon, in effecting the celebrated flight from the house of the seven gables, kept whispering to herself again and again, "Am I awake?" and again and again exposed her withered face to the chill spatter of the wind, for the sake of its rude assurance that she was.

Another aspect altogether of the welcome given to rough winds of heaven is seen in the journey due north in quest of Little Nell, when so keen a blast was blowing, and rushed against the travellers fiercely; but little cared Kit for weather. there was a freedom and freshness in the wind, as it came howling by, which, let it cut never so sharp, was welcome. "The harder the gusts, the better progress they appeared

to make" in their posting, and a good thing it seemed to go struggling and fighting forward, vanquishing the gusts one by one; and, in Lord Lindsay's phrase, making progress by antagonism.

§ II.

GOOD LOOKS AT A LOOKING-GLASS.

"There was never yet fair woman, but she made mouths in a glass."

King Lear, Act III, Sc. 2.

LET us, as Shakspeare himself does, interpose the Fool and his shrewd babble, amid the tumult of the storm

Not only every good woman, but every good son of good woman born, does well to feel resentful, if not towards Pope himself for writing that line about every woman being at heart a rake, at any rate towards the sort of people who are fond of quoting it, and because of the tone and manner with which they are apt to do so. But she were a wight, perhaps, to be accounted of a peevish tendency, and over-ready to take fire at slight kindling, who should cherish anger against the Fool in *Lear* for his sweeping accusation, if it be one, of the sex, for all time, that there was never yet fair woman, but she made mouths in a glass. It may be hard to be called upon to prove a negative; but, in this case, might it not be quite as hard to disprove it? Date back, if you will, to the mother of all flesh; and can you believe that she never paused to gaze on her reflected image? No glass in the Garden of Eden? Agreed. But there was a river to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads; and the surmise is too natural to be unpardonable, that Eve may have studied her features in Euphrates, and in Hiddekel, and in Gihon that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia, and in Pison that compasseth the whole land of Havilah, the gold of which land is good: *there*, too, is bdellium and the onyx stone,—materials for ornaments at once suggestive of, and

indeed almost nothing without, a glass. Pison would mirror their refulgence, in the days before glass was known

Byron has a picture of a Child of Nature who, if fond of a chance ogle at her glass,

“’Twas like the Fawn which, in the lake display’d,
Beholds her own shy, shadowy image pass,
When first she starts, and then returns to peep,
Admiring this new Native of the deep.”

Wordsworth has what some might deem a companion picture of a cottage girl,

“Whose heaviest sin it is to look
Askance upon her pretty Self
Reflected in some crystal brook.”

In the twenty-seventh canto of his *Purgatory*, Dante has a dream of Leah and Rachel,—Leah decking herself at the crystal mirror, avowedly to please herself; and adding,

“But my sister Rachel, she
Before the glass abides the livelong day,
Her radiant eyes beholding, charm’d no less
Than I with this delightful task”

of culling flowers. Which things are an allegory. For by Leah is signified the active life, as with Martha; and Rachel figures the contemplative, as does Mary

Adam Smith explains our first ideas of personal beauty and deformity to be drawn from the shape and appearance of others, not our own. We soon become sensible, however, that others exercise the same criticism upon us; anon we become anxious to know how far our looks please them. “We examine our persons limb by limb, and by placing ourselves before a looking-glass, or by some such expedient, endeavour, as much as possible, to view ourselves at the distance, and with the eyes, of other people.” Clemens Alexandrinus was of opinion that ladies broke the second commandment by using looking-glasses, as they thereby made images of themselves. Mr. Thackeray, on the other hand, utters a benediction upon them in that attitude; it’s their place, he says;

they fly to it naturally, it pleases them, and they adorn it. What he liked to see, with a more malicious liking, what he watched "with increasing joy and adoration," was the Club *men* at the great looking-glasses; old Gills pushing up his collars and grinning at his own mottled face, Hulker looking solemnly at his great person, and tightening his coat to give himself a waist, etc., etc. "What a deal of vanity that Club mirror has reflected, to be sure!" His phrase of the great looking-glasses reminds us of a grumbling passage in Anthony à Wood's *Diary*, where that old Oxford man complains sorely that the Warden of Merton College did, "by the motion of his lady, put the college to unnecessary charges, and very frivolous expenses, among which were a very large looking-glass, for her to see her ugly face, and body to the middle, and perhaps lower, which was bought in Hilary terme 1674, and cost, as the bursar told me, about 10½" Helen in her old age, looking at herself in a mirror, is a subject which old sonnetteers were fond of borrowing from the Greek Anthology. "His counsel," says Gwillim the Pursuivant, "was very behoveful, who advised all gentlewomen often to look on glasses, that so, if they saw themselves beautiful, they might be stirred up to make their minds as fair by virtue as their faces were by nature; but if deformed, they might make amends for their outward deformity, with their intern pulchritude and gracious qualities" And those that are proud of their beauty he would have consider that their own hue is as brittle as the glass wherein they see it—a forcible expression, if not a very accurate one, so far as the conjunction of hue and brittle is concerned. Goldsmith offers us a description of a first-rate beauty who, on recovery from the smallpox, revisits her favourite mirror, that mirror which had repeated the flattery of every admirer, and even added force to the compliment, and who, expecting to see what had so often given her pleasure, no longer beholds "the cherried lip, the polished forehead, and speaking blush, but a hateful phiz, quilted into a thousand seams by the hand of deformity. Grief, resentment, and rage fill her bosom by turns, she blames the fates and the stars, but most of all the unhappy glass feels her resentment."

We see Juliana, in Mr. George Meredith's unconventional tale, approaching her glass with nervous, slow steps, first brushing back the masses of black hair from her brow, and then looking as for some new revelation. Long and anxiously she perused her features: the wide bony forehead; the eyes deep-set and rounded with the scarlet of recent tears; the thin nose—sharp as the dead; the weak, irritable mouth and sunken cheeks. She gazed like a spirit disconnected from all she saw. Presently a sort of forlorn negative was indicated by the motion of her head. "I can pardon him," she said, and sighed. "How could he love such a face?" But her author doubts if she really thought so of Evan Harrington, seeing that she did not pardon him. Compare or contrast with this study-sketch Lord Lytton's of Constance, pausing at a moment when "perhaps her beauty had never seemed of so lofty and august a cast," to gaze on her stately shape reflected in a mirror, and doing so with a feeling of triumph, not arising from vanity alone. "Beauty is so truly the weapon of woman, that it is as impossible for her, even in grief, wholly to forget its effect, as it is for the dying warrior to look with indifference on the sword with which he has won his trophies or his fame." It is a lady-novelist who gives us so different a study from either of these, when she reflects on the reflection of her heroine from the glass, that nothing is capable of more ghostly effect than such a silent, lonely contemplation of that mysterious image of ourselves which seems to look out of an infinite depth in the mirror, as if it were our own soul beckoning to us visibly from unknown regions. Those eyes look into our own with an expression sometimes vaguely sad and inquiring; and the face wears weird and tremulous lights and shadows; it asks us mysterious questions, and troubles us with the suggestions of our relations to some dim unknown. But this is a theme which Nathaniel Hawthorne, by right of Monsieur le Miroir, and other fantasy-pieces, had made peculiarly his own.

Reflections of familiar faces at the glass crowd upon us from fiction old-fashioned and new. There is Sophia Western's woman, Mrs. Honour, too much absorbed in surveying her

own features, "in which, of all others, she took most delight," to observe the effect produced by her discourse on her young mistress's countenance. And there is Sophia herself, in the penultimate chapter, interested to know what the security, the pledge for her inconstant lover's future constancy may be, and forthwith led by him to the glass, to see that pledge in her peerless self. There is Scott's Amy Robsart, breaking off from her joyous talk with Janet, to look at herself "from head to foot in a large mirror, such as she had never before seen," and viewing "with pardonable self-applause" the reflection of such charms as were seldom presented to its polished surface. There is Ethel Newcome, looking from the grand-mamma who foresees in her the prettiest Countess in England to "the glass, which very likely repeated on its shining face the truth her elder had just uttered. Shall we quarrel with the girl for that dazzling reflection, for owning that charming truth, and submitting to the conscious triumph? Give her her part of vanity, of youth, of desire to rule and be admired." There is Adam Bede's Hetty, ill-tempered with her bit of a glass every time she dresses by it, because of the numerous dim blotches sprinkled over it, which no rubbing would remove; though even that mottled old mirror could not help sending back a lovely image. There is Molly Gibson looking at herself in the glass with some anxiety, for the first time in her life; and seeing here a slight, lean figure, a complexion browner than cream-coloured, etc.,—and thinking herself not pretty, as she turns away, yet not quite sure. She would have been sure, at least her author is for her, if, instead of inspecting herself with such solemnity, she had smiled her own sweet merry smile, and called out the gleam of her teeth, and the charm of her dimples. There is the narrator of *Aunt Margaret's Trouble* recalling, fifty years later, that picture not a touch or tint in which had meanwhile faded. "I knew very well that it was not a beautiful face—that it was scarcely even pretty. But it was irradiated now, with a light that transfigured it." And once more, and by way of contrast, perhaps of relief by contrast, there is Miss Squeers in confabulation with Phib, but intent on her own little glass, where, like most

of us, it is said, she saw—not herself, but the reflection of some pleasant image in her own brain

To the thinking of Judge Haliburton's shrewd Senator, looking-glasses are the greatest enemies ladies have, and ought all to be smashed, not that they are false, for they will reflect the truth if they are allowed; but, unfortunately, "truth never looks into them. When a woman consults her glass, she wishes to be pleased, she wants to be flattered, and to be put on good terms with herself, so she treats it as she would her lover; she goes up to it all smiles, looking as amiable and as beautiful as she can. She assumes the most winning airs, she gazes at the image with all the affection she can call up, her eyes beam with intelligence and with love, and her lips appear all a woman could wish, or a man covet. Well, of course the mirror gives back that false face to its owner, as it receives it; it ain't fair, therefore, to blame it for being unfaithful, but as ladies can't use it without deceiving themselves, why, total abstinence from it would be better." Mrs. Brunton's Laura, in *Self-Control*, if not a total abstainer, was so advanced in the temperance cause as to be a phenomenon: not ignorant of her beauty, she is said to have set no value on the distinction, and "as she never used a looking-glass, unless for the obvious purpose of arranging her dress, she was insensible to the celestial charm which expression added to her face." That is self-control to some purpose; but *Self-Control* is an old-fashioned novel. Now in Madame Mère du Régent we have a historical celebrity who yet was, on principle and in practice, a total abstainer. Asked, one day, why she never gave a glance at a mirror in passing, she said it was because she had too much *amour-propre* to like to see herself as ugly as she really was.

It is piquant to turn from Madame Mère to that Madame de Saint-Loup whose grandson, M. de Villemessant, has described her in his *Mémoires*, and who, though blind from cataract, always had a mirror brought to her after she was dressed, and made her grandson hold it as she passed an imaginary review, eked out by questions for her further enlightenment. "La femme est toujours femme," he writes;

and *qui sait*? the poor old blind lady may have seen, amid the shades of darkness which compassed her about, a defined and unfading phantom of her vanished youth.

There are some verses in Scott's *Lord of the Isles* which may be accepted as a paraphrase, expanded, of the curtly expressed but comprehensive proposition of the Fool in *Lear*.

"O ! lives there now so cold a maid
Who thus in beauty's pomp array'd,
In beauty's proudest pitch of power, . . .
With every charm that wins the heart,
By Nature given, enhanced by Art,
Could yet the fair reflection view
In the bright mirror pictured true,
And not one dimple on her cheek
A tell-tale consciousness bespeak?"

§ III.

A NAUGHTY NIGHT TO SWIM IN

"Fool Pi'ythee, nuncle, be contented, this is a naughty night to swim in"
King Lear, Act III, Sc 4.

KENT, and Edgar, and the Fool, all three,—it is more than they can do to keep the crazed old king from stripping, let the rain drench him as it may. "Off, off, you lendings!—Come, unbutton here," he cries, when the predominant idea of the moment is man's pitiful incapacity to endure with uncovered body the extremity of the skies. Edgar, as a Tom o' Bedlam, is his text and his exemplar: "Tom's a-cold," with but a blanket on him, that bitter night; and Lear will emulate his almost nakedness, and put himself on a level with that "poor, bare, forked animal." The Tom o' Bedlam shall not be alone in his "loop'd and window'd raggedness." So Lear in his delirium tears off his clothes; he that, just before, had followed up his words, "My wits begin to turn," with the fond address to the Fool, "Come on, my boy; how dost, my

boy? Art cold? I am cold myself." Colder and colder he would be. Was Edgar vilely clad? *He* would be yet more vile. Or rather, he would dispense with all clothing—toss it all to the winds—the winds that were doing him, that night, such cruel wrong. Then sought the poor shivering Fool to stop the stripping process. "Pr'ythee, nuncle, be contented; this is a naughty night to swim in."

He had tried to coax the old king into taking shelter, in the midst of his passionate defiance of the storm. The unity of the wild speech, "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks," is broken in upon by the Fool's remonstrance, "O nuncle, court holy-water [said to be a proverbial phrase for 'fair words'] in a dry house is better than this rain-water out o' door Good nuncle, in, and ask thy daughters' blessing: here's a night pities neither wise men nor fools." He can speak for himself, for he feels it feelingly, poor fool, feels it to the marrow of his bones. Presently Kent takes up the appeal.

"Alas, sir, are you here? things that love night,
Love not such nights as these, the wrathful skies
Gallow [scare] the very wanderers of the dark,
And make them keep their caves"

A night too bad for famished wolf to venture out in, must indeed be a naughty night for an old man to swim in.

Caleb Williams on the bare heath, drenched and wind-driven and cut by hailstones, but pushing doggedly on, his heart bursting the while with depression and anguish, Darsie Latimer breasting the Solway on that "naughty night to swim in," when the trees were crashing, groaning, and even screaming in the glen, as their boughs were tormented by the gale, the gipsies in *Guy Mannering*, drinking to the good voyage of the parted spirit,—“a squally night he's got, however, to drift through the sky in,” Clement, in *Cloister and Hearth*, going stoutly forward through wind and rain, and with the wolves baying on his track, as he beat his breast, and cried *Mea culpa!* remorseful of neglect to a dying man; John Middleton, in Mrs. Gaskell's story, roused

at midnight by a soaked and battered wanderer, old and weary, while the rain beat against windows and doors, and sobbed for entrance, and it seemed as if the Prince of the Power of the Air was abroad—shrieks borne upon the blast resembling the cries of sinful souls given over to his power—so that naturally the query was put to the vagrant, "Whence do you come? It is a strange night to be out on the fells,"—or again, William Trefalden, as Miss Edwards tells the ending of him, pooh-poohing the shocked expostulation of the landlord of the Lion d'Or, "Great heaven! Walk three leagues and a half in this terrible storm! Let Monsieur only listen to the rain—listen to the wind! Besides, Monsieur was wet through already," or staid and sober Matthew Danby, of Mrs. Marsh's making, on the night that his wife is missing, and he determines to start himself on an instant quest, despite the remonstrant reminder that "the night's like the deluge, and the streets all of a swim;" these are among the illustrations that crowd upon the memory, of the Fool's pregnant phrase of a naughty night to swim in.

The night that Eleanor Le Strange watched and saw her father die—she and the old man alone together, as they had always loved to be—the wind rose a little at nightfall, and came sighing, sobbing, "keening," about the old eaves and gables, and the snow turned to sleet; and beat and pattered against the panes. "It seemed so hard to die on such a night; so hard for a poor bare soul to go shuddering out into the great dark void." She could have better let him go from her, she thought, on some bright warm summer nooning, when you could almost see heaven's gates a long way up into the azure depths.

King Ethwald, in the historical tragedy which bears his name, perplexes his attendants by going forth by night, when the moon was dark, and cold and rudely blew the northern blast. In sooth, he held contention with the night. Hardly such a night, however, as that described in another of the Plays on the Passions, when the war of elements is heard, whose mingled roar brings to the ear the howl of raging fiends, the lash of mountain billows, the wild shrieks of

sinking wretches ; altogether a fearful night, when many a soul, on sea and land, must have found a dismal end. Such an end as that of Ruth, in the narrative poem—Crabbe's, not Wordsworth's,—

“The night grew dark, and yet she was not come ;
The east wind roar'd, the sea return'd the sound,
And the rain fell as if the world were drown'd.”

Ruth had left her child. Eunice's child, in *Hedged In*, has left her, died on a bitter night, with a storm of wind that had raged since morning ; and “It seems a dreadful night—for a baby—to go out in,” is all the young mother says, under her breath.

A naughty night to swim in. A confused medley of examples, historical and fictitious, occurs obtrusively to the memory that is ill at selection and embarrassed by numbers. One thinks now of Mr. Carlyle's description of the night of the 12th-13th October, 1756, when the Saxon army was getting itself out of Pirna : “dark night, plunging rain ; all the elements in uproar. The worst roads in Nature ; now champed doubly.” Such a march as might fill any heart with pity : dark night, wild raging weather, labyrinthic roads worn knee-deep. Wet and hunger conjoined ; rain still pouring, wind very high. Or of that May 29th, 1757, “most wild night for the Prussian army in tents”—rain-torrents mixed with battering hail—when Moldau came down roaring double deep, with cargoes of ruin, torn-up trees, drowned horses, and the bridge at Branik broke away. Or say, of the Princess Sobieski's night escape from Inspruck, “taking advantage of a storm of wind and hail,” and never resting till she had got from Austrian to Venetian territory, “notwithstanding bad roads and worse weather” Or Lady Harriet Acland, during the American war (1777), bent on sharing her husband's captivity, and embarking accordingly in an open boat, exposed to wild weather, on one of the naughtiest of nights. *That* reminds us (though perhaps it should not) of the paragraph in *Foul Play*, beginning, “And now came a dirty night—to men in ships, a fearful night to men in boats ;” the sky black, the

sea on fire with crested billows, that broke over them every minute On such a night the jester's daughter meets her doom, in *Le Roi s'amuse*:

“Quel temps ! Pluie et tonnerre. Oui, l'on fait à cette heure
Mauvais ménage au ciel, l'on gronde et l'autre pleure”

On such a night takes Tam o'Shanter his memorable ride.

“An' sic a night he tak the road in
As ne'er purr sinner was abroad in.
The wind blew as 'twad blaw its last,
The rattling showers rose on the blast,
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd,
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellow'd;
That night, a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.”

§ IV

A NIGHT TO GIVE WOLVES SHELTER.

King Lear, Act III., Sc. 7.

SUCH a night of nights was that of Lear's exposure on the heath, that Gloster is free to tell ruthless Regan to her face,

“If wolves had at thy gate howl'd that stern time,
Thou shouldst have said, Good porter, turn the key.”

Cordelia says of that night, at an after time, when she is tending her poor unconscious old father, and asking of the face she kisses, Was this a face to be exposed against the warring winds? to stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder, in the most terrible and nimble stroke of quick, cross lightning?—of that night she says, in Gloster's spirit, and in near affinity of similitude,—

“Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
Against my fire.”

And on such a night was her father fain to hovel him with swine, and rogues forlorn, in short and musty straw.

The French king, in Victor Hugo's drama, expostulates in another vein.

"Comme il pleut! Veux-tu donc que je sorte
D'un temps à ne pas mettre un poète à la porte?"

So does Horace—in a tone that has been contrasted with that of the more earnest wooer, in the Scotch ballad of "Let me in this ae nicht," "Thou hear'st the winter wind and weet, Nae star blinks thro' the driving sleet; Tak pity on my weary feet, And shield me frae the rain, jo." The first stanza of the Ode, *Extremum Tanai si biberes, Lyce*, Mr. Theodore Martin has thus effectively rendered.

"Though your drink were Tanais, chillest of rivers,
And your lot with some conjugal savage were cast,
You would pity, sweet Lycè, the poor soul that shivers
Out here at your door in the merciless blast."

The conclusion is Horatian in spirit and letter alike. *Non hoc semper erit luminum aut aquæ Cælestis patiens latus* Like Lear, he was not ague-proof, when the rain came to wet him once, and the wind to make him chatter

For her enemy's dog, Cordelia would find or make house-room, and hearth-room too. Shelley tells us how

"Household dogs, when the wind roars,
Find a home within warm doors."

But Cordelia's large charity takes in stray curs of alien birth and hostile breed. Something of resemblance to her, so far, that girl in a latter-day fiction bears, who tells a reprover, "If a dog should come to me and tell me he was in trouble, I think I should listen to him, and show some kind of interest to help him." So, in his way, does Uncle Jack in *The Caxtons*, when he protests, with emotion, to his brother-in-law,— "Austin, if I were a dog, with no home but a dog-kennel, and you came to me for shelter, I would turn out—to give you the best of the straw!" Jane Eyre reproaches the old house-keeper at Marsh End for her inhospitality: "You wished to

turn me from the door, on a night when you should not have shut out a dog." To a younger and kinder inmate she had previously said, "If I were a masterless and stray dog, I know you would not turn me from your hearth to-night." It is a moody man with "the key of the street" who, as he watches a street cur ruminating over cigar-stumps and cabbage-stalks, which no homeward-bound dog would do, accounts even that dog happier than *he* is; "for he [the dog] can lie down on any doorstep, and take his rest, and no policeman shall say him nay; but the New Police Act won't let me do so, and says sternly that I must 'move on.'" Rayner, in Joanna Baillie's tragedy so named, as a lone and tempest-beaten traveller, begs shelter for the night in an old man's cave; and when told that he is come where never guest yet entered, he replies,

"I do not ask admittance as a guest
Wouldst thou not save a creature from destruction,
E'en a dumb animal? unbar the door,
And let me lay my body under shelter."

Obviously the old man comes not of the kin of that titled lady in one of Mr. Trollope's books, who would not have allowed a dog to depart from her house, in dark December days, without suggesting to him that he had better pick his Christmas bone in her yard.

Hood's poem of *The Forge* has one passage picturesquely pertinent to our purpose :

"The lightning flashes, the thunder crashes,
The trees encounter with horrible clashes,
While rolling up from marish and bog,
Rank and rich, as from Stygian ditch,
Rises a foul sulphureous fog,
Hinting that Satan himself is agog,—
But leaving at once this heroical pitch,
The night is a very bad night in which
You wouldn't turn out a dog."

* * * *

'Tis merry in the hall of Cedric the Saxon, when beards wag all, and the jest goes round within, while wind and rain are making wild work of it without. Without stands Isaac

the Jew, and implores admittance, and the porter's page makes known to the master the entreaty of the stranger at his gate. "Admit him," said Cedric, "be he who or what he may;—a night like that which roars without, compels even wild animals to herd with tame, and to seek the protection of man, their mortal foe, rather than perish by the elements." It is in *Ivanhoe* too that we find the captive Abbot complaining of the usage he has met with at the hands of Robin Hood's men,—“it were usage fit for no hound of good race” In *Redgauntlet*, the Pretender's mistress inveighs against “those silly fools, the Arthurets,” for admitting into the house a heretic lawyer, “at a time when they should have let their own father knock at the door in vain, though the night had been a wild one.” This voluble termagant was the sort of dame to approve and subscribe to that clause in the formularies of the Vehmgericht which forbids the relieving a denounced man with fire, food, or shelter, “though my brother should request to sit by my fire on the bitterest cold night of winter.” Mordaunt Mertoun, in *The Pirate*, once within the sheltering walls of the inhospitable Yellowleys, laughs in her face at the simplicity of Mrs. Barbara in requiring him to turn out. “Leave built walls,” said he, “and in such a tempest as this? What take you me for?—a gannet or a scart do you think I am, that your clapping your hands and skirling at me like a madwoman, should drive me from the shelter into the storm?” “And so you propose, young man,” said Triptolemus, gravely, “to stay in my house, *volens nolens*—that is, whether we will or no?” “Will!” said Mordaunt, “what right have you to will anything about it? Do you not hear the thunder? Do you not hear the rain? Do you not see the lightning? And do you not know this is the only house within I wot not how many miles? Come, my good master and dame, this may be Scottish jesting, but it sounds strange in Zetland ears.” Triptolemus and Baby are as churlish in their way as the porter in Book III. of the *Facrie Queene*, whom Paridell importunes so urgently :

“But all in vaine , for nought mote him relent :
And now so long before the wicket fast